This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

The works of Antonio Canova

Antonio Canova, Isabella Teotochi Albrizzi,
Leopoldo Cicognara, Henry Moses, Melchior Missirini

Digitized by Google

From the
Fine Arts Library
Fogg Art Museum
Harvard University

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

WORKS

OF

ANTONIO CANOVA,

IN

SCULPTURE AND MODELLING,

ENGRAVED IN OUTLINE BY HENRY MOSES;

WITH

DESCRIPTIONS BY THE COUNTESS ALBRIZZI.

AND

A BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR

BY

COUNT CICOGNARA.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

HENRY G. BOHN, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

MDCCCXLIX.

Digitized by Google

FA5107.1.7 (2)

1860, July 13.
Pickman Bequest.

Digitized by Google

FRANCIS I.ST

Digitized by Google

FRANCIS I.

EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA.

(BUST IN MARBLE.)

THERE is a mixture of suavity and firmness in this countenance, such as is rarely found in nature, and which presents great difficulties to imitative art, from the nice shades by which these qualities are distinguishable from the contiguous faults of weakness and severity. The pliant wax could not have obeyed more felicitously the masterly hand of the sculptor. What force and truth in that expression! The tinge of melancholy which nature has spread over his countenance is also faithfully preserved on this transparent marble. Canova, at the same time that he has accurately delineated the features of this august monarch, has indulged his natural tendency to the beau ideal in the pure forms of the neck and ears, and the largeness of the chest: these, however, finely accord with that mild and prepossessing countenance, which indicates the excellent qualities the original so eminently possesses.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE PRINCESS OF CANINO.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

PRINCESS DI CANINO.

(A BUST IN MARBLE.)

WHETHER it is a creation of his own imagination, or a copy from that of nature, Canova is always unapproachable in his representations of the female form and features. This bust carries with it an assurance of resemblance to its beautiful original: and is it not frequently said of a portrait, done from nature by some able artist, although the original is unknown, that it must be a likeness? Must there not be then a peculiar character given by nature, an expression which is not to be found in the creations of art, however excellent in other respects. Canova, when restrained in his work, as in the present instance, to a faithful representation of the life, seems to indulge his imagination with more freedom in the dress and arrangement of the hair, disposing it with a grace, variety, and art, that produces, as in this bust, the most agreeable effect.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CANOVA.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BUST

OF

ANTONIO CANOVA.

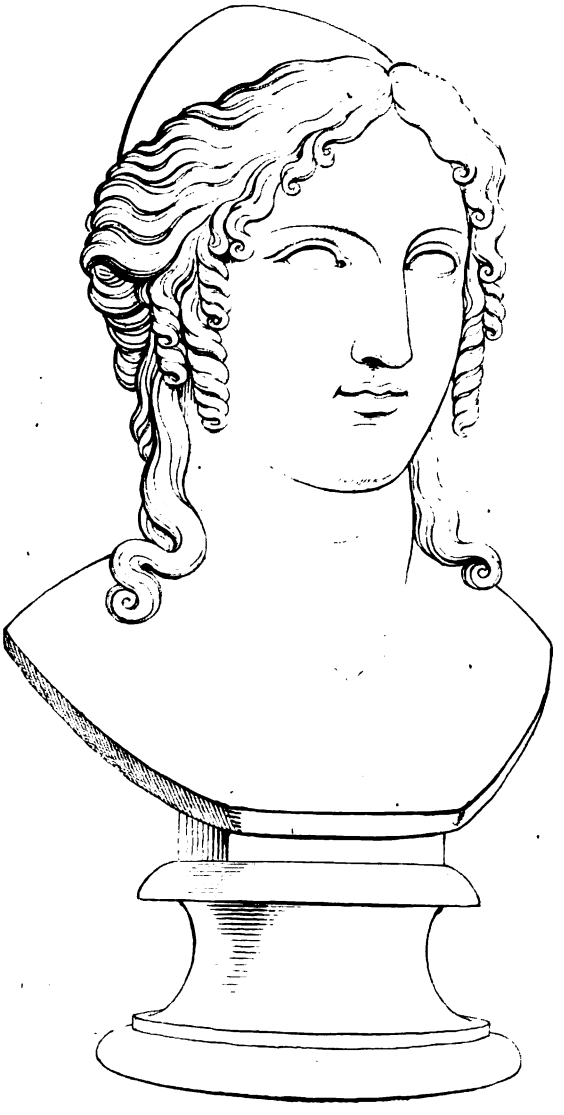
(COLOSSAL SIZE IN MARBLE.)

Oh, transcendent Genius! oh, mighty mind! here I behold thee at last! here I see the first and only likeness which is worthy of the great archetype whose lineaments are so deeply engraven on our minds! it is Canova himself! the animated attitude of the head, which is slightly turned to the left, is that of one whose spirit kindles with the most glowing conceptions of beauty; his earnest and sublime look seems to traverse the immensity of space lying open before him, and his creative imagination to be forming those stupendous combinations which are afterwards to be embodied in his noble marbles. The mouth is slightly open, in harmony with the other parts of the countenance, which is animated with a divine ardour; while the nostrils, slightly distended, and seeming to breathe, complete our illusion. The neck, from the fineness of its form, and the high finish of the execution, excites our wonder and admiration; this part alone would

Digitized by Google

reveal the consummate skill of its author; like the celebrated Torso, which being restored to Italy by the late favourable turn in affairs, may again be called the Torso of Belvedere. The features of thy amiable countenance, O Canova! that part of it I mean which is, if I may so express myself, earthly, I have already seen portrayed in a thousand different ways; but here alone, in this marble, I trace thy splendid imagination—thy lofty conceptions—thy great and unequalled soul. Thou alone couldst worthily portray thyself, for who else could fathom a mind like thine, and comprehending fully thy noble nature, represent it to others? O Canova! if time, the inexorable devourer of all things, should destroy the noble works which bear the impress of thy genius, and spare this one alone, thou wouldst be recognised by all, even if thy great name were not engraven there; if thou couldst be forgotten, posterity would then value it as a treasure of Grecian antiquity; but no, never can any one mistake thy image, or thy workmanship.

Digitized by Google



HELEN.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

HELEN.

(A BUST IN MARBLE.)

In this bust the genius of Canova has embodied those ardent but indefinite ideas of Helen's beauty, which are raised in our minds by the reading of ancient story. Inspired by the divine Homer, his imagination has effected more than was attempted by that consummate painter himself, who, fearing to impair the exquisite creation of his fancy by description, has impressed our minds with the beauty of the Spartan queen, only by its mighty effects; the artist, therefore, unfettered by the duty of imitation, was at liberty to indulge his excited fancy in investing her image with the most exquisite beauty; and who, on beholding this facinating daughter of Homer's fancy, breathing from the plastic hand of Canova, can refrain from exclaiming with the aged men of Troy:—

> "Trojans and Grecians wage with fair excuse
> Long war for so much beauty! O how like,
> In feature, to the goddesses above."
>
> *Cowper's Iliad.*

Digitized by Google

Yet, looking on this Helen, we know not how they could add:—

> "Pernicious loveliness! Ah, hence away!
> Resistless as thou art, and all divine,
> Nor leave a curse to us, and to our sons."
>
> *Cowper's Iliad.*

That enchanting Helen was to Paris the precious token of the gratitude of Venus—and now her image presents itself to my eyes, endeared by the same noble sentiment,—but this highly valued gift serves only to manifest the friendship and generous feelings of Canova towards me, for as to these imperfect descriptions of the delightful productions of his chisel, his indulgence alone, in respect to them, has made me proud and grateful.

But to return to my subject:—a cap, resembling in form the half of an egg-shell, the emblem of the offspring of Leda, covers the back part of her head; in the front, her beautiful tresses, divided at the middle of the forehead, lie back in graceful undulations, and are gathered in a knot behind, while rich curls hang clustering down her cheeks, or wanton on her lovely neck. Her features, which are perfectly beautiful, and have all the fineness and delicacy of the Grecian face, are animated with a gentle and bewitching smile. Canova, whose genius can pourtray

Digitized by Google

the most refined and complicated affections, has united in this bust the dignity of a goddess with the expression of human passions, which alone awaken human sympathies; while we gaze on it, respectful and voluptuous feelings contend within us, but beauty is finally triumphant.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CALLIOPE.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CALLIOPE.

(A BUST IN MARBLE.)

When Canova had conceived the design of presenting an image of one of the muses to Professor Rosini, of Pisa, he could not have made a more appropriate choice than this of Calliope, the muse of poetry, and peculiarly of epic and lyrical poetry.

Her countenance is full of soul and of thought; she seems to be meditating intently on some lofty ideas, and we almost fear to disturb the workings of her mind, which seem ready to burst in eloquent language from her lips. If the sculptor had given the figure complete, we should have seen her with the pen in her right hand, and her tablets in the left, in the act of recording the sublime images that are floating in her mind.

Her hair is arranged with a scrupulous care; it is parted in the front so as to reveal her high and beautiful forehead, and falling back, elegantly shades her temples and cheeks with its closely curled ringlets.

This Canovian muse is the chief ornament and presiding deity of a place that I may, perhaps, call a small temple, which the Professor has dedicated to the

Digitized by Google

study of the fine arts, of which he is so passionate a lover. There he invokes the aid of Calliope, and as the fine verses which he has lately composed on the untimely death of the lovely and excellent Virginia Orsucci attest, with the greatest success.

Digitized by Google

AN IDEAL FEMALE HEAD.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

AN IDEAL FEMALE HEAD.

(IN MARBLE.)

THIS bust is interesting, as presenting to us the idea of female beauty of this profound artist; it was sculptured for the Marchioness di Grollier, a circumstance which will give it additional interest with all who are acquainted with a lady who not only possesses the most amiable qualities of the heart, and singular refinement of mind, but also great taste and skill in the fine arts.

The character of the beauty which the sculptor has given to this imaginary countenance, is not that of any nation in particular, but is such that any one might be flattered by its approbation. Destined for so polished a city as Paris, where all the arts of elegance, and among others those of the toilette, are carried to so great a perfection, the artist seems, by the studious grace with which he has arranged the hair, and its elaborate execution, to have designed to display the power of his art by giving to his marble all the softness and luxuriant elegance of the Parisian head dress.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CORINNA.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CORINNA.

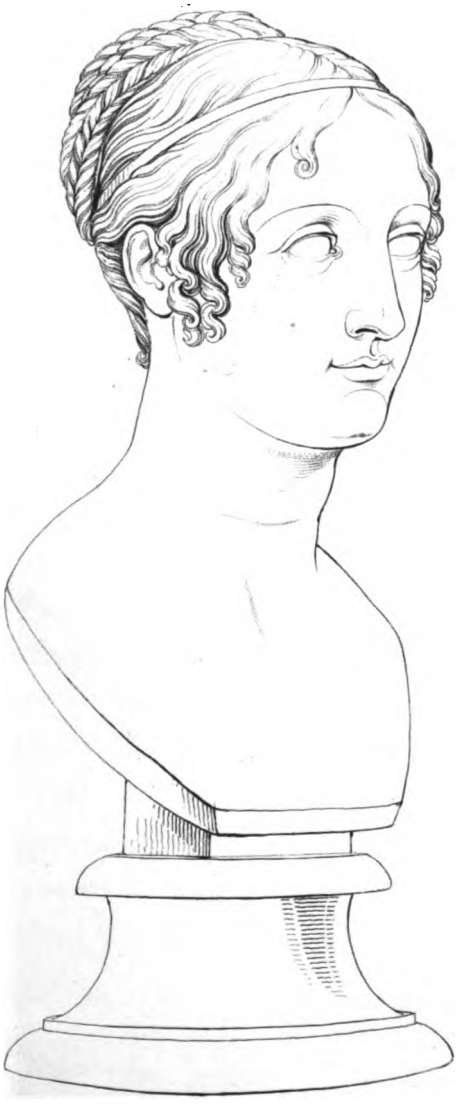
(A MARBLE BUST.)

THE naturally gifted minds of the ancient Greeks received all the advantages of careful cultivation, and of the presence of objects which tended to foster their vivid and imaginative genius; and the muses, to whom particular honours were paid, ever granted, when invoked by them, their most propitious aid. The celebrated poetess, whose image in purest marble is here presented to us by Canova, was born about the sixty-ninth Olympiad, and was a contemporary of Pindar, over whom she is said to have triumphed five times in contending at the public games for the poetic crown. This account is too flattering to a woman's vanity for it to be expected that I shall very scrupulously examine its foundations; it is probable, however, that her personal charms, which we are told were as surpassing as her genius, contributed to her success with judges, who, being men, cannot have been wholly unbiassed in their decision. The style and costume of this beautiful bust are entirely Grecian. The hair is arranged with peculiar grace; a nar-

Digitized by Google

row fillet passing over her forehead, binds her luxuriant tresses to her temples; above which they are formed into a knot, giving additional effect to the gentleness and dignity of her countenance. A veil is thrown lightly over this, one end of which folding her lovely chin, ascends to the head again, while the other end, ornamented with a border, flows down upon her left shoulder. The veil, worn in this manner, is still in use among the Grecian women, and gives a peculiar grace to their features; and never should the sex abandon those simple forms of dress, which, at the same time that they are the most becoming, are an evidence of that virtue without which there are no real charms—Modesty. It is this alone that secures the esteem and devotion of men, and induces them, notwithstanding the pride, and perhaps the superiority of their sex, willingly to see their proudest distinctions disputed and invaded. Beautiful is the Laura of France; more beautiful the Italian Beatrice. But how shall we express the charms of the Grecian Helen, and of Corinna?—fairest of that favoured clime—they mark the limits of imagination and of art!

Digitized by Google



Engraved by Henry Moses.

LAURA.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LAURA.

(A BUST IN MARBLE.)

"Vedi ben quanta in lei dolcezza piove."—PETRARCA.

THE praises and the unfortunate love of Petrarch, have conferred on Laura a celebrity fully equal to that of Dante's Beatrice, whose image I have already noticed. These two busts may be considered as models of the fair of France and of Italy, and if the charming Avignonaise (born under a sky less propitious to beauty) yields to her rival in regularity of features, she is, perhaps, more distinguished by those graces and attractions which seems so peculiarly to belong to her countrywomen, and whose influence is more resistless than that of beauty alone.

The sculptor has admirably inspired his work with that tender and empassioned glance, that subduing loveliness which the enamoured poet describes in such glowing terms.

Her features and neck are exceedingly delicate and beautiful, and her charming mouth is playfully about to open, with a smile that at once attracts and

Digitized by Google

subdues us; a narrow riband encircles her head, and confines those golden tresses which the poet so often speaks of with rapture; they are parted at the forehead, and fall down the temples in narrow ringlets, or braided and wound round the head in elegant circles. Poetry and sculpture have thus combined their noblest efforts to preserve the fame of Laura, and to transmit the memory of her charms and excellencies to posterity.

Digitized by Google

ERATO.

Published by Septimus Prowett 282 Strand

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

ERATO.

(A BUST IN MARBLE.)

"Erato tu che sei
Della sorte di Venere compagna
E le non tocche verginelle molci
Coi tuoi pensier, donde il tuo amabil nome."

Apolonio Rodio.

THE gentle muse whom the Poet thus addresses presides over tender and amatory poetry, and the gaiety and festivities of marriages; and although the sculptor has here presented only her bust, yet the sprightliness and joyousness of that smile sufficiently reveals the nymph.

"Erato bella che il nome ha d'amore."

Canova has enriched this bust with all the graces of his chisel; and Love himself must have lent his aid to form those full and gently breathing lips, those large soft eyes, and sweetly rounded chin; there he has left distinct traces of himself, and communicated all his seductive influence. The elegant arrangement of the hair befits the muse whose presence was invoked at gay assemblies and festive

Digitized by Google

rites, shading and adorning her fair forehead with short thick ringlets, curling like the tendril of the vine, while the glossy tresses behind are braided and wound around her head in graceful circles.

Digitized by Google

BEATRICE.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BEATRICE.

(A BUST IN MARBLE.)

Per esempio di lei beltà si prova.—*Dante.*

THERE are, indisputably, in individuals of the same nation, certain peculiarities of feature and look which distinguish them from those of every other nation. In ancient Greece, the most perfect models of human beauty, and the most highly endowed minds, mutually aided each other to produce a refined and correct taste; by the former, beautiful forms were made familiar to the eye, while the latter, acted on by a fanciful mythology, and by ardent and susceptible feelings, formed the most admirable and sublime combinations. By these means, aided by those magnificent examples of art which they possessed, the Greeks attained to so perfect a knowledge on subjects of taste, that the standards determined on by them, have been, ever since, the highest authority, particularly among the Italians, who are their most worthy successors in the arts.

Canova has, however, in representing this celebrated Italian lady, justly departed from the Grecian

Digitized by Google

models of female beauty so familar to his classical mind, in order to portray, with greater faithfulness, that lovely Beatrice whom the divine Dante has immortalized. In this countenance he would represent that distinct character of Italian beauty, which is dissimilar from, rather than inferior to, that of Greece, and which will, I think, command the admiration of all those who are not exclusively admirers of Grecian models.

With a kindred spirit, he has taken the divine Dante for his guide, and, aiding his imagination by his descriptions, has portrayed the lovely Beatrice such as she appeared when she approached the poet—"gay as beautiful, her eyes sparkling with love, and looking on him with angelic smiles." The drapery, which descends from her head and adorns her beautiful cheek, attracts the notice of the beholder. Say, Canova, with what slender threads didst thou weave that light and pervious gauze, which seemed to defy the art of sculpture, and thy genius; how could even thy divine chisel penetrate that marble veil, to sculpture those delicate ears, which are finished with so much softness and spirit? In that countenance is expressed the sympathetic soul of Beatrice, and in that

"Riso, che sol dall' occhio si sentiva,"

we find that gentleness, gaiety, and modesty, which

Digitized by Google

the concurring testimony of Boccaccio also attributes to her. Those lips appear to be opening to express

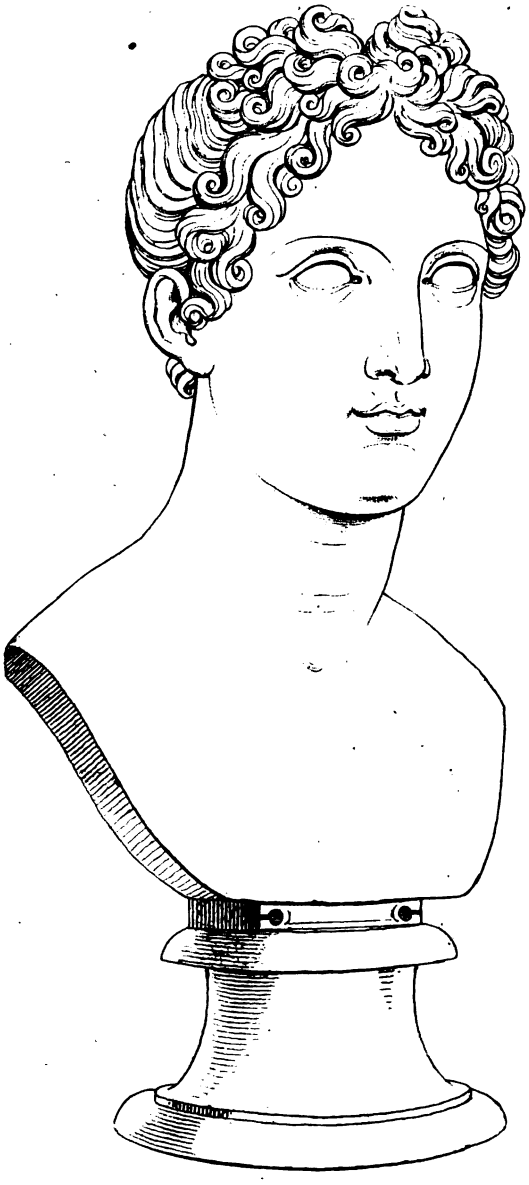
"Soave et piana
Con angelica voce in sua favella—" *Inf.* ii. 36.

those gentle and noble sentiments which the impassioned poet imagines her to utter. Her beautiful tresses are arranged with the greatest elegance, and, gracefully curling in luxuriant ringlets, give a softened charm to her fine countenance.

The artist must have been delighted to be able to indulge his imagination, unfettered by rules, in forming this beau ideal of Italian beauty; by selecting those charms which nature bestows separately, even among her favourites, but which are never united except by the imaginations of men of genius. Wonderful faculty! which may be called, without derogating from the reverence due to the Supreme Being, the creative power of art.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



[illegible] Sculpt. Engraved [illegible]

LEONORA D'ESTE.

Published by Septimus Prowett *269 Strand.*

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LEONORA D'ESTE.

(A BUST IN MARBLE.)

Vergine era tra loro di gia matura
Virginità, d'alti pensieri e regi,
D'alta beltà; me sua beltà non cura,
O tanto sol quant' onestà sen fregi,
E il suo pregio maggior, che tra le mura
D'angusta casa asconde i suoi gran pregi:
E da' vagheggiatori ella s'invola
Alle lodi, agli sguardi, inculta e sola.

Tasso, Gerusalemme, Canto II.

THE passion of the susceptible Tasso for the Princess Leonora D'Este, at the court of whose brother he lived, is well known; restrained, however, by her rank and dignity of character, from the open utterance of the praises which love inspires, he had recourse to the poet's artifice, and in the character of Sophronia, has indulged himself in speaking of those charms of person and mind of which he was so deeply enamoured; particularly in the two stanzas I have copied here, which form a part of the most beautiful episode of which love or the Italian muse can boast.

Poetry, addressing itself to the imagination alone, has yet the advantage of presenting its images in all their various and successive forms, while sculpture is necessarily limited to a single representation of its subject. Canova has, however, in this bust, so used the resources

Digitized by Google

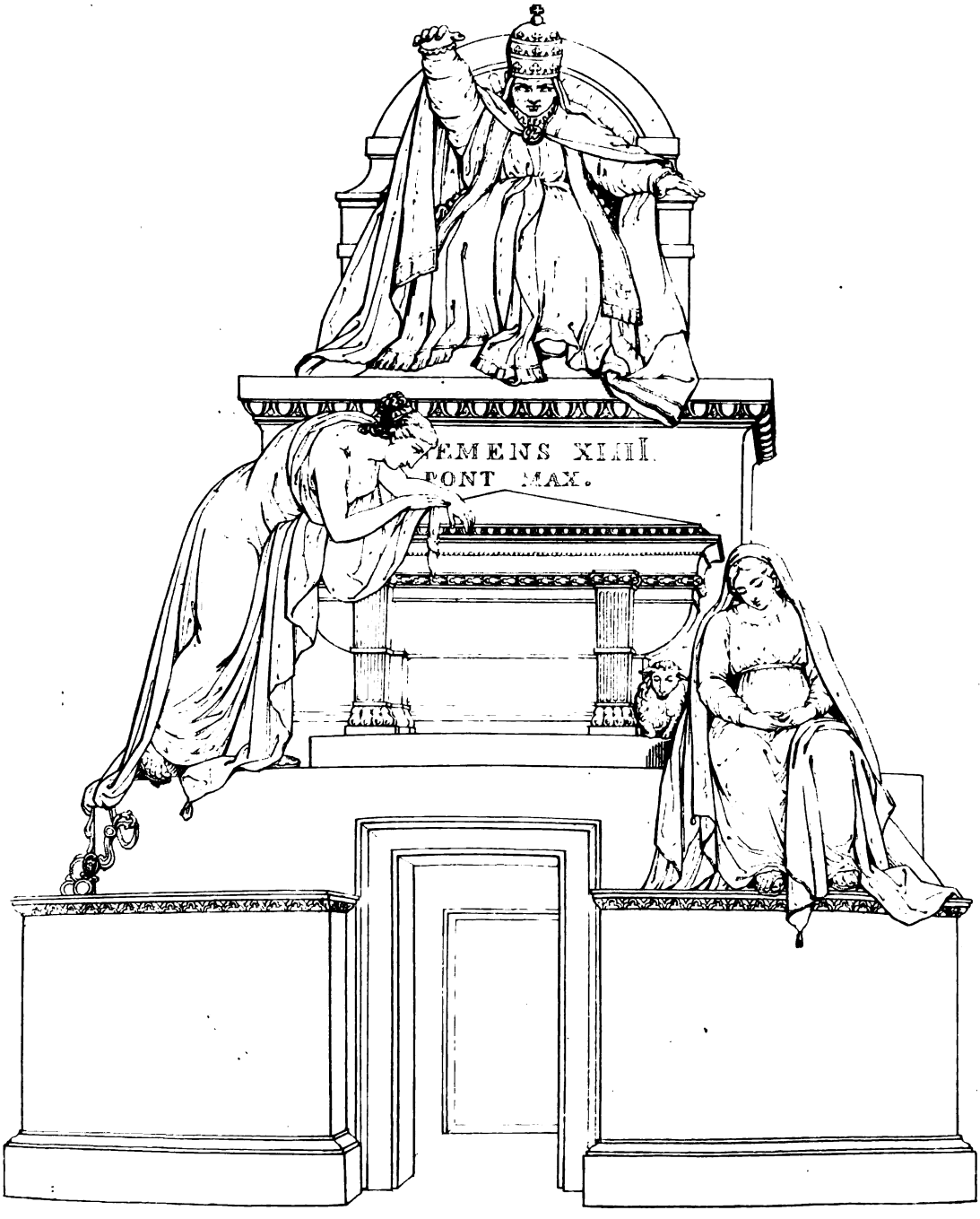
of his art as to make the decision difficult, whether the palm be the due of the poet or the sculptor; here we find all those lofty and attractive endowments which the poet so ardently describes,—beauty, nobleness, and modesty; and even the "retiring glance," which the poet speaks of in another passage, is not forgotten here. The hair also becomes significant by the ingenuity of our artist, who neglects none of the scanty means of effect which a bust affords; here he makes use of it to shew the bounty with which nature had adorned her with beautiful tresses, and also her indifference to personal attractions; shading her beautiful forehead and brows with those rich clustering ringlets which nature there dresses with her own embellishing hand; while the longer tresses behind, which require the hand of art, are simply bent forward, and knotted with negligence at the top of her head.

Thus have poetry and sculpture combined their noblest efforts to perpetuate the memory of the excellent Leonora.

"All' onesta baldanza, all' improviso
Folgorar di bellezze altere e sante,
Quasi confuso il Re, quasi conquiso
Frenò lo sdegno, è placò il fier sembiante.
S'egli era d'alma, o se costei di viso
Severa manco, ei diveniane amante:
Ma ritrosa beltà ritrosa core
Non prende; e sono i vezzi esca d'amore."

Tasso, Gerusalemme, Canto II.

Digitized by Google



MONUMENT OF CLEMENT XIV.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT OF CLEMENT XIV.

This monument, so full of grandeur and simplicity, was not the cold tribute of pride or the vanity of enriched relatives, but the pure offering of affection and of gratitude. The mausoleum is situated in the church of the Holy Apostles, at Rome, within an intercolumniation of the composite order. The block which forms its base is divided in the centre by the entrance to the tomb, and supports an ample basement of grey marble, on which, placed a little further back, is the plinth that bears the sepulchral urn; bending over this, with all the abandonment of grief, is the colossal figure of Temperance, her accustomed emblem, the bridle, lying at her feet; from behind this rises the pedestal, ornamented with an elegant cornice, which supports the statue of Ganganelli seated in a magnificent curule chair, on one side of which he rests his left hand, while the right is extended forward as if in the act of bestowing his blessing on the subject world. Seated on the basement below, on his left, is the figure of Meekness, with her emblem, the lamb, lying beside her; her attitude—her hands clasped and resting listlessly on her lap—her eyes fixed on the ground, and almost concealed by her sunken eyelids, all

Digitized by Google

express the deepest humility; she seems to weep, but without murmuring, and, with a mind fixed on Heaven, and obedient to its will, submits resignedly to her bitter loss; her simple attire consists of a tunic, encircled at the waist by a narrow band, over which a veil, descending from the top of the head, flows on both sides down to the ground: this interesting female, whose figure and aspect so fully express her amiable character, pleases us more perhaps in this age of turbulent passions, when we should lose even the memory of this rare quality, unless it were preserved in the breasts of a virtuous few, among whom the sculptor who has so finely imagined this may certainly be numbered; and to the natural benignity of Canova's disposition, as much as to the exalting influence of his art, may be attributed that frame of mind which, separating him from the baser scenes of life, leads him to pass his days among those lofty and perfect imaginings to which his chisel has given form and existence, and which, at the same time that it allows him to enjoy this pure and enviable tranquillity, ensures to him a lasting reputation in his works.

The following is an extract from a letter, written by Milizia to Count San Giovanni, on the subject of this monument, shortly after its erection in 1787:—

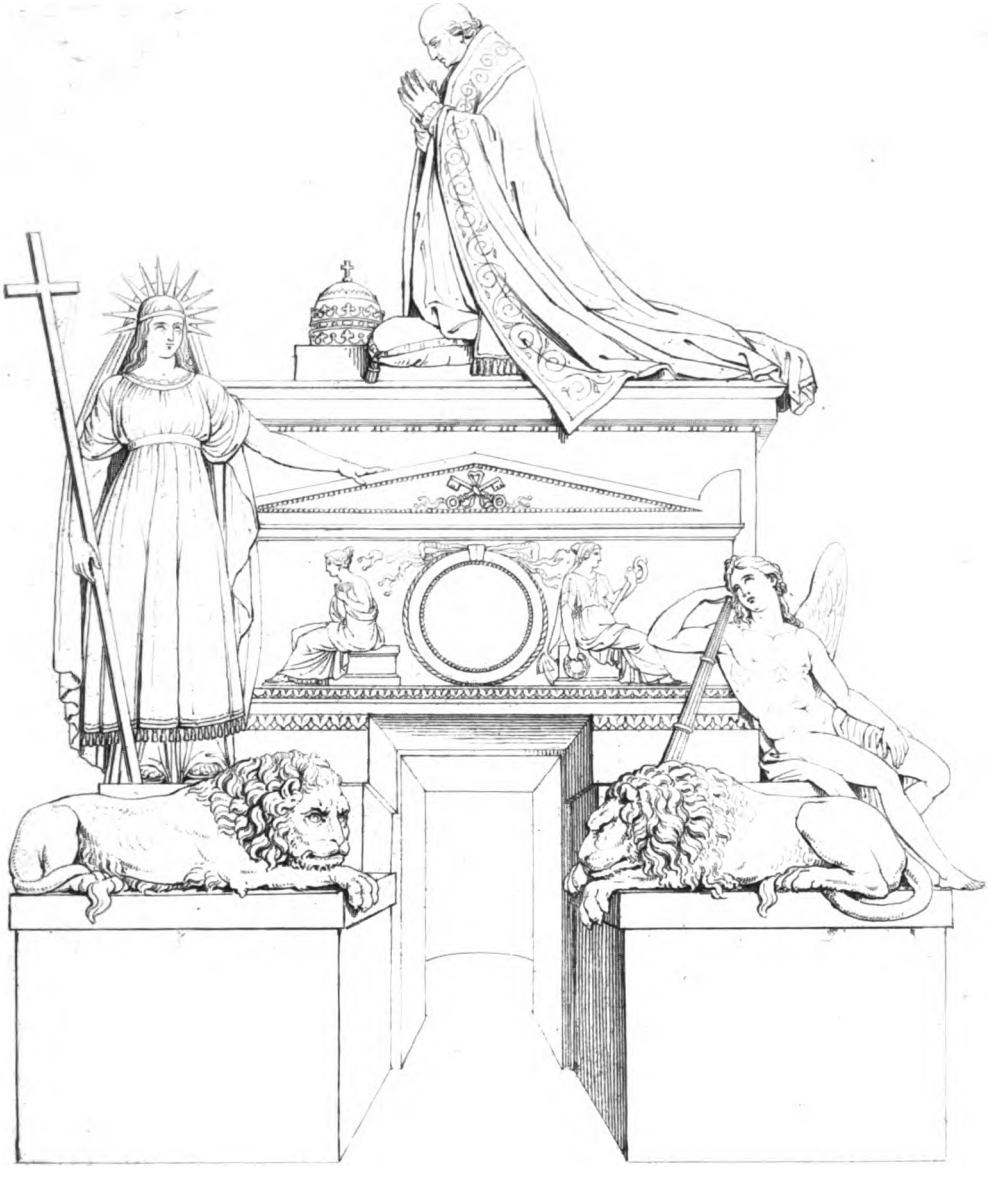
"In the church of the Holy Apostle, near to the sacristy, and fronting to one of the side aisles, a mausoleum has been erected to the late Pope Ganganelli,

Digitized by Google

by Antonio Canova, a Venetian sculptor; and so great is the simplicity of this composition, that, although it seems all facility, it is yet full of fineness and difficulty. What repose! what elegance! what harmony!—Both the sculptural and the architectural parts, in general effect, and in detail, are highly classical. Canova may, indeed, be classed among the ancients, but I hardly know whether he belongs more to Athens or to Corinth; but of this I feel assured, that if, in the best time of Grecian art, a subject of this nature had been to be treated, it would have been by such a work as this. During the twenty-six years which I have lived in this city of the world, I have never before seen such universal admiration excited by any work of art as by this. The most intelligent and liberal artists pronounce it to be the nearest approach to the ancients of all the productions of modern sculpture; even the Jesuits can praise and admire this marble Ganganelli, which certainly may be deemed a miracle of that Pope, who will derive as much glory from this monument as from the suppression of that order; if any thing were needed to convince us that this is a perfect work, it would be furnished by the censures of the Michael Angelists, Berninists, and Borrominists, who point out as defects those parts which are its greatest beauties—charging the drapery, the outlines, and expression with being Grecian:—*Dio abbia pieta di loro.*"

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



MONUMENT OF CLEMENT XIII.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT OF CLEMENT XIII.

(IN MARBLE.)

THIS grand composition is an instance of what a mind like Canova's is able to effect when aided by the influence of a religion which is the source of our most sublime and unearthly ideas. Situated in the most august temple in the world, and surrounded by prodigies of art, it still attracts our attention and fixes us before it in astonishment and admiration. It is placed between an intercolumniation, and has for its base a block of grey marble, divided in the middle by the entrance to the sepulchre, on either side of which a magnificent lion reposes; receding from this, and raised upon a double basement, is the funereal urn which contains the ashes of this excellent pontiff; in the front is a medallion, on which is inscribed CLEMENTI XIII. R.P.M.F. and the figures of Hope and Charity, and above the medallion the emblematic keys; behind this, and raised on a large and elegant block of marble, is the kneeling statue of the venerable Clement; his attitude finely expressive of deep devotion and of that contrition of mind which

Digitized by Google

is the distinguishing feature of Christianity. Antiquity furnishes nothing that could have served as a model to Canova for the sublime expression of piety and resignation in this figure. On the right of the statue is a colossal figure of Religion, her right hand sustaining the cross, while the left reposes on the urn with a dignified and expressive action; her majestic form, the mild gravity and tranquillity of her countenance declare her divine origin, and mark her as the type of that religion, which in a peculiar degree animated and guided the author of this sublime composition: on the opposite side of the urn is seated a winged genius, who, holding in his right hand an inverted torch, regards the urn with an expression of acute sorrow: nothing can exceed the purity of form, the beauty of countenance, and the grace of this celestial youth.

Digitized by Google

Antonio Canova Sculpt.

MONUMENT OF CHEVALIER EMO.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT

OF THE

CHEVALIER EMO,

PROCURATOR OF ST. MARK, AND CAPTAIN EXTRAORDINARY OF THE FLEET OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC.

(ALTO RELIEVO IN MARBLE.)

THIS monument, raised by a grateful country to the last of her free and illustrious heroes, is a composition of great ingenuity and admirable execution. It is in very high relief, the figures being in some places detached from their ground, which consists of a large block or wall of marble, and with a happy allusion the artist has represented at the base one of those floating batteries which were invented by the Chevalier Emo, and with which he hurled destruction on the barbarians in the last war.

The bust, which is an admirable likeness of the original, is placed upon a rostrated column, which rises from the edge of the battery, and is bathed by the waves of the sea.

While gazing on this figure you almost believe that real armour covers his breast, that you see its

Digitized by Google

lustre, and that his weather-beaten face, the sternness of which is increased by his lowering glance, his ample brows, and scanty locks, is nature itself.

The artist has represented the hero in his habitual state of imperturbable calmness, which did not forsake him, even on that disastrous day when a tremendous storm destroyed the fleet under his command at Eleos; and raging in vain against a vessel guided by so skilful a mariner, strewed the surrounding waves with wrecks and drowned bodies. He then evinced the greatness of his soul in thus addressing the senate: "Suffer, Conscript Fathers, I entreat of you, that my whole patrimony be applied towards restoring the great loss which the republic has this day sustained."

A beautiful winged genius, the tutelary angel of Venice, the same that hovered over, and prompted the heroic actions of Dominico Michieli, Enrico Dandolo, Morisini, and so many other heroes of the republic, is here personified by the creative imagination of Canova. This angelic youth descends from the skies (for earth produces no such bright and perfect beings), and with a gracious and complacent aspect, holds, with both arms extended, a civic crown, in the act of placing it on the hero's brows. On the opposite side, Fame, her ample wings raised from her fine shoulders, and her trumpet laid aside to shew her intention of conferring

Digitized by Google

more lasting renown, resting one knee on the battery, writes, with a golden pen, the name of Emo; while, with her left hand raised towards the bust, she points out to us the hero whose glory she would render immortal. The serenity and deep interest which her look expresses, reveals to us how dearly she cherishes the memory of this great man, and her solicitude to transmit the knowledge of his splendid deeds to the latest posterity. The forms of this celestial figure are of exquisite grace and beauty. By the calmness and placidity of her aspect, Canova seems here to wish to represent that true and guiltless fame which no remorse disquiets—whose brightness is unimpaired by the lapse of ages—and which accompanies, inseparably, the memory of those true heroes, who, although their hands are bathed in blood, were actuated solely by the sacred love of an insulted and oppressed country.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MODEL OF A

Digitized by Google

A MONUMENT.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MODEL OF A MONUMENT,

INTENDED TO BE ERECTED

TO THE MEMORY OF FRANCESCO PESARO.

(THE FIGURES IN WAX.)

On the death of the Venetian Patrician Guiseppe Priuli in December 1822, there was found among his effects a case containing a model of a sepulchral monument with the figures in wax, it was immediately recognised as the work of Canova's genius, although no one had ever heard of it, and the sculptor, who usually registered his works with great accuracy, had omitted all mention of it. I cannot describe the emotion which this discovery created among the friends of Canova, it seemed to them that they again had him among them, and were enjoying the delight which they had been accustomed to feel whenever he produced to them any new effort of his genius. They were, however, left in doubt respecting its object and destination, when fortunately some papers were found in the archives of the Patrician L. G. Recanati, by which they learned that it was designed to be erected at Venice, in memory of the Chevalier Francesco Pesaro, Procurator of St. Mark, who died in the year 1798; there were also a drawing

Digitized by Google

of the monument, a list of the noble friends who were to contribute to the charge (eight thousand zechins), and a letter in the hand-writing of Canova on the subject of the work. It is not known by what unlucky circumstances this intention was frustrated, the model however is all that remains of it, which I shall here briefly describe:—It consists of a large funereal urn, placed on a quadrangular base, which is raised by three steps from the pavement. In the front is a medallion, presenting, in profile, the bust of the Chevalier and Procurator Pesaro, dressed in his Patrician robes, and the costume of the Venetian Chevaliers of St. Mark: below, the Fates (which Canova has here modelled for the first time) are represented clothed in long and ample dresses, and with their usual attributes. Atropos is in the act of cutting the thread, disregarding the cries of a group of Venetians, who, in various attitudes of grief and despair, supplicate her to forbear. She regards them with an inexorable aspect, and raising her left hand with an expression of displeasure, fulfils with the other her cruel office; this pathetic scene, which refers to a point of time anterior to that of the principal subject, the sculptor has ingeniously represented in basso-relievo, which seems peculiarly fitted to express a passed event, without injuring the unity of the composition.

An august matron (the allegorical figure of Venice),

Digitized by Google

clothed in ample drapery, and her hair lying unbound over her shoulders, is standing at the right side of the tomb, and bending over the urn, in an attitude of abandonment to grief; in one hand is an offering of a wreath of flowers, the other holds up a border of the mantle to her streaming eyes; at her feet is a little winged genius, bearing her ducal cap: the lion, which lies crouching behind her, seems by its mournful aspect to be sensible of the loss which Venice has sustained. On the opposite side another lion seems to eye the fatal sisters, enraged at the evil which they have inflicted on his protected nation. The artist has here evinced his admiration of that noble animal, so long the proud and respected standard of the Venetian republic, and which from the valour and success with which it was supported, wherever it was planted in their career of victory, acquired for the Venetians the once glorious surname of Pianta Leoni.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT OF THE ARCHDUCHESS CHRISTINA OF AUSTRIA.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

GROUP I.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

GROUP II.

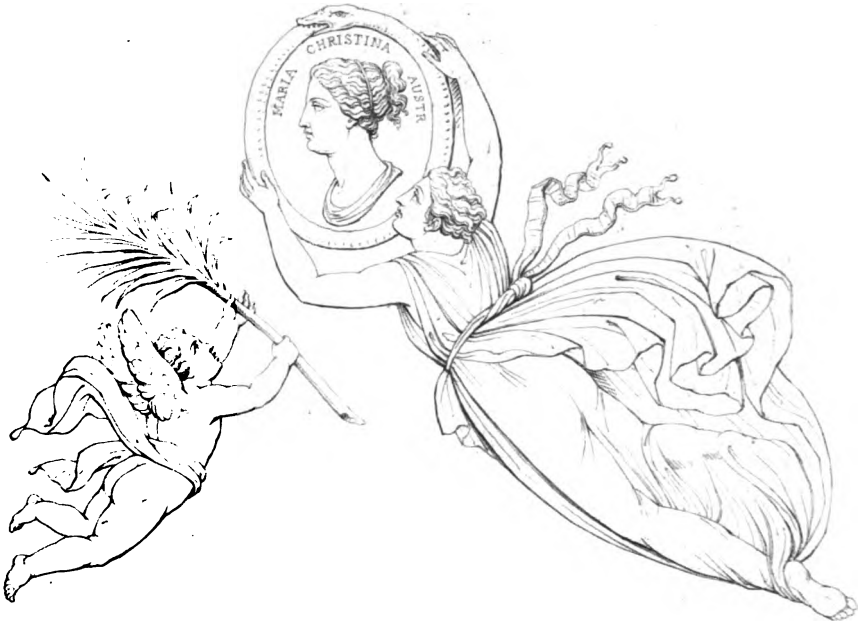
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

GROUP III.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



GROUP IV.

Published by Septimus Prowett, 360 Strand.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT

OF

THE ARCHDUCHESS CHRISTINA OF AUSTRIA.

(IN MARBLE.)

THIS Mausoleum, placed in the church of the Augustines, at Vienna, is in memory of Christina of Austria, daughter of Maria Theresa, and wife of Duke Albert, of Saxe Teschen. This beautiful and pathetic composition was executed by Canova, at the desire of her afflicted husband, whose grief must be soothed and alleviated by the comtemplation of the celestial figures which here so finely express the virtues of her whose memory he so fondly cherishes.

The monument, the material of which is a greyish marble, presents one side of a pyramid to the spectator, being only slightly raised from the wall against which it rests; it is placed upon an ample base, from which two steps are raised, and form the approach to the door of the tomb, over which on the architrave, the following inscription is engraven:—CHRISTINÆ. AUSTRIACÆ. ALBERTI. SAXONIÆ. PRINCIPIS. CONJUGI.

There are nine figures employed in this monument, beside the lion and the medallion; they are all of the natural size, and may be divided into four groups; the first, which occupies the middle part, consists of an alle-

Digitized by Google

gorical figure of virtue, with two young females bearing torches: Virtue is represented in the form of a young matron of a dignified but afflicted aspect, bearing before her the funereal urn, on which, bending down, she rests her forehead; she is attired in a rich tunic and a mantle gracefully and appropriately disposed; her hair is unbound and spread disorderedly over her shoulders, and her head encircled with the olive crown: ascending the steps, which are spread with a rich carpet, she approaches the door of the tomb. The attendant who goes before her has already reached the entrance, where her steps seem for a moment arrested by the awful feelings which the place inspires, but, bending forward and lowering her torch to illumine the dark abode, she prepares to enter:—the pious attitude of this young female, her loosened tresses falling down in rich curls upon her shoulder, her simple attire and modest step, give to her figure a grace and expression which, unaided by the effect of countenance, I have never seen equalled. The other attendant, who is behind, and is seen in profile, has the same simplicity of dress and character; with downcast eyes, and slow and devoted step she follows her celestial conductor: two wreaths of flowers, joined at the top of the urn, connect these figures, which from the depth and harmony of the sentiment which unites them would separately form a perfect and charming composition.

They are followed at a short distance by the second

Digitized by Google

group, observing in some degree, the order of a procession : it consists of a female figure, whom, from the gentleness of her aspect we recognize to be Beneficence, a blind and aged man, whom she is leading, and a young female child. Beneficence is attired with all the simplicity and grace of the Grecian manner ; her hands are sorrowfully crossed before her, and her eyes fixed on the ground with an air of gentleness and affliction : so perfect is the character and expression of this eloquent figure, that she awakens within us all the heightened feelings that the most pathetic poetry could convey ; she has ascended the first step, and is followed by the old man, who, leaning on her arm, tries with the aid of his staff to raise himself on the step ; his appearance bespeaks the feebleness of age and poverty, and his countenance, on which acute sorrow is depicted, is turned towards the tomb, which probably contains his best friend and benefactress ; the child who stands beside him, and who is described with a simplicity conformed to her tender age, is in the humble attitude of prayer. In this group the artist makes a lively allusion to the warmth and readiness of benevolence for which the princess was so much distinguished. A wreath of flowers, lying on the ground, occupies the short space between the first and second groups, and if our feelings are excited by these deeply empassioned figures, the fine diagonal line in which they cross the steps of the monument is no less pleasing to the eye.

Digitized by Google.

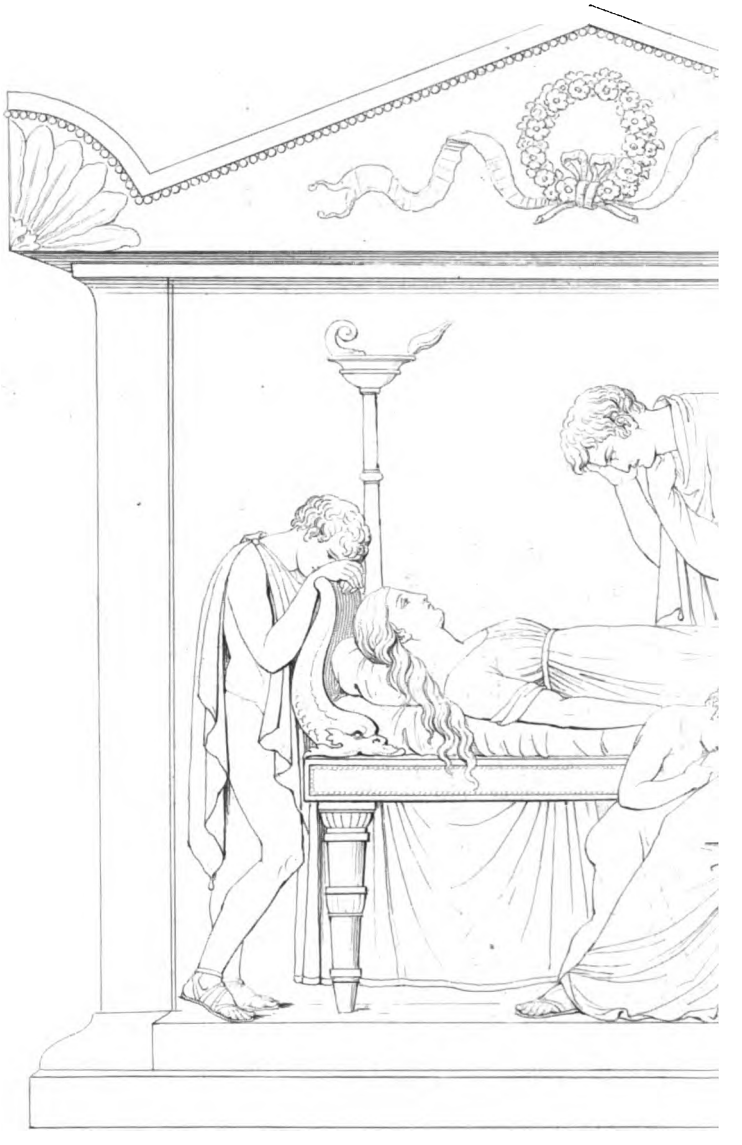
Opposite to these figures, and on the left of the tomb, is a magnificent lion lying crouching on the upper step, and seems the faithful and eternal guardian of the tomb; seated beside him on the steps of the monument is a winged genius, whose form and aspect discover his celestial origin; a mantle spread beneath him protects his delicate limbs, bending forward, and leaning with his right arm and side against the lion; he stedfastly and mournfully looks on the funereal procession, while his right hand rests upon the shield of the House of Saxony, of which he is the tutelary genius.

The fourth group, which occupies the upper part of the pyramid, is of a more exalted character; the figure of Felicity is there represented bearing upward the image of the princess encircled by the emblem of eternity; the aërial grace and lightness of her motion, her serene and heavenly countenance, her delicate limbs and buoyant drapery, are all of the most perfect taste and execution; on the other side a little winged genius flies towards her bearing the branch of palm.

Favoured by heaven, in an illustrious birth and splendid destiny on earth, this princess is no less felicitous in possessing such a tomb, where the memory of her virtues, which are symbolized by the most perfect creations of genius, is perpetuated, and which will continue to be an object of interest and admiration so long as virtue and genius shall be regarded on earth.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



MONUMENT OF TI

Digitized by Google

E COUNTESS D'HARO.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT

OF

THE COUNTESS D'HARO.

(IN MARBLE.)

" In questa forma
Passa la bella donna e par che dorma."

THE great sensibility of Canova's nature, and the vividness of his imagination, lead him ever to identify himself entirely with subjects of this nature, and give a truth of expression to his impassioned compositions that is sure to excite corresponding feelings in the beholder. Of this effect the basso relievo on this tomb is an evident instance; its object was to soothe the grief of a disconsolate mother at the loss of a beloved daughter, who died in the flower of her age, and surrounded by the most flattering prospects of happiness. She is here seen stretched out on an elegant couch, her fine form only slightly concealed by simple drapery; her firm unwasted cheek and rounded arms, and her whole appearance seeming to belong rather to one held in tranquil slumber than

Digitized by Google

in death; the long glossy tresses, which fall down as if just escaped from a band or comb, seem designed to indicate the suddenness of her death, which those around her long mistook for sleep; a single lamp throws round a gloomy ray, and reveals the melancholy truth to her afflicted family. At the foot of the bed her unhappy mother sinks down wholly abandoned to grief; beside the couch is seen the husband of the deceased bending over her lifeless form in an attitude of profound affliction; and three youths, her brothers, whose appearances finely and naturally betoken their sorrow, complete the group; beneath this pathetic scene the following inscription briefly and eloquently speaks the deep and devoted sorrow of a mother's heart—

Mater infelicissima filiæ et sibi.

Digitized by Google

CINERARY VASE OF THE COUNTESS DIEDE DE FURSTENHEIM.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE CINERARY VASE

OF

THE COUNTESS DIEDE DE FUIRSTENHEIM.

(BASSO RELIEVO IN MARBLE.)

All'ombra de'cipressi, e dentro l'urne,
Confortate di pianto, è forsi il sonno
Della morte men duro? *Foscolo, I Sepolcri.*

THIS Urn of bright Carrara marble, which is finely sculptured and of a very elegant form, is placed (amidst numberless fragrant and carefully cultivated flowers) near to the church of the Eremitani at Padua, but is excluded from its sacred precincts, as it contains the ashes of one who professed the Protestant faith. On approaching it, I behold, sculptured in basso relievo, in a medallion, the Portrait of the Countess Diede de Fuirstenheim, with the same pleasing expression of countenance and amiable smile that I have seen her wear, when sweetly conversing she has excited the love and admiration of all around her. Two weeping boys, sculptured with infinite truth and delicacy, stand, cross-legged, on either side of the medallion, over which, each ex-

Digitized by Google

tending an arm, clasps the hand of the other with brotherly affection. One holds in his hand the torch reversed, while that of the other is leaning neglected against his side. Here we are reminded of the great father of poetry, with whose spirit the mind of Canova is so deeply imbued; and also of those inspired artists of Greece, who, with exquisite fancy, symbolized both living and eternal sleep, by the figures of boys reposing. Sometimes they are placed beside tombs, standing with their legs crossed, the symbol of repose; and sometimes (gentle and expressive image!) lying on the lap of a female figure, the personification of night.

Thus did they seek to alleviate the gloomy and insupportable idea of death, by associating it with that of gentle and consoling sleep; but can we ever wholly subdue this thought so terrific to all, but particularly to the gentler sex,

"Che ricca lascia eredità d'affetti;"

amidst the smiles of beauty and pleasure, and the captivating illusions of youth?

This monument the artist has placed at the foot of a lofty cypress, a tree peculiarly consecrated to the dead, either because its pyramidal form, pointing to heaven, indicates the only source whence we derive force to support the terrible aspect of Death—or that, insensible to the joyous seasons of the year, and

Digitized by Google

unadorned by flowers, its dark foliage and gloomy uniformity, express the grief of those who weep over the ashes of the dead; and, perhaps, its enduring growth and perennial verdure, symbols both of lasting sorrow and of immortality, soothe, with pleasing illusions, the minds of those who deposit beneath its shade some loved remains.

Engraven on the column upon which the urn is placed, we read an inscription, in the German language, in honour of the deceased: and opposite, on a marble table, another in Latin, enumerating her many virtues and amiable qualities. On the lower part of this tablet is engraven the armorial bearings of the houses of Diede and of Callemberg, circled by the emblem of eternity.

The Cypress and the Vase, which may be considered as forming one monument, are surrounded by seven funereal Candelabra, connected together by a golden chain, which, fastening at either end into the wall, forms its enclosure: trees, flowers, torches—vain and useless pomp to her who is insensible of all things!—ye do but prove how much the soul requires here the aid of soft and flattering illusions!

Inscribed on each of the Candelabra, I read the name of some dear friend of the deceased, and a motto, the last affectionate tribute of their friendship. Surrounded by these objects, my mind revolves the

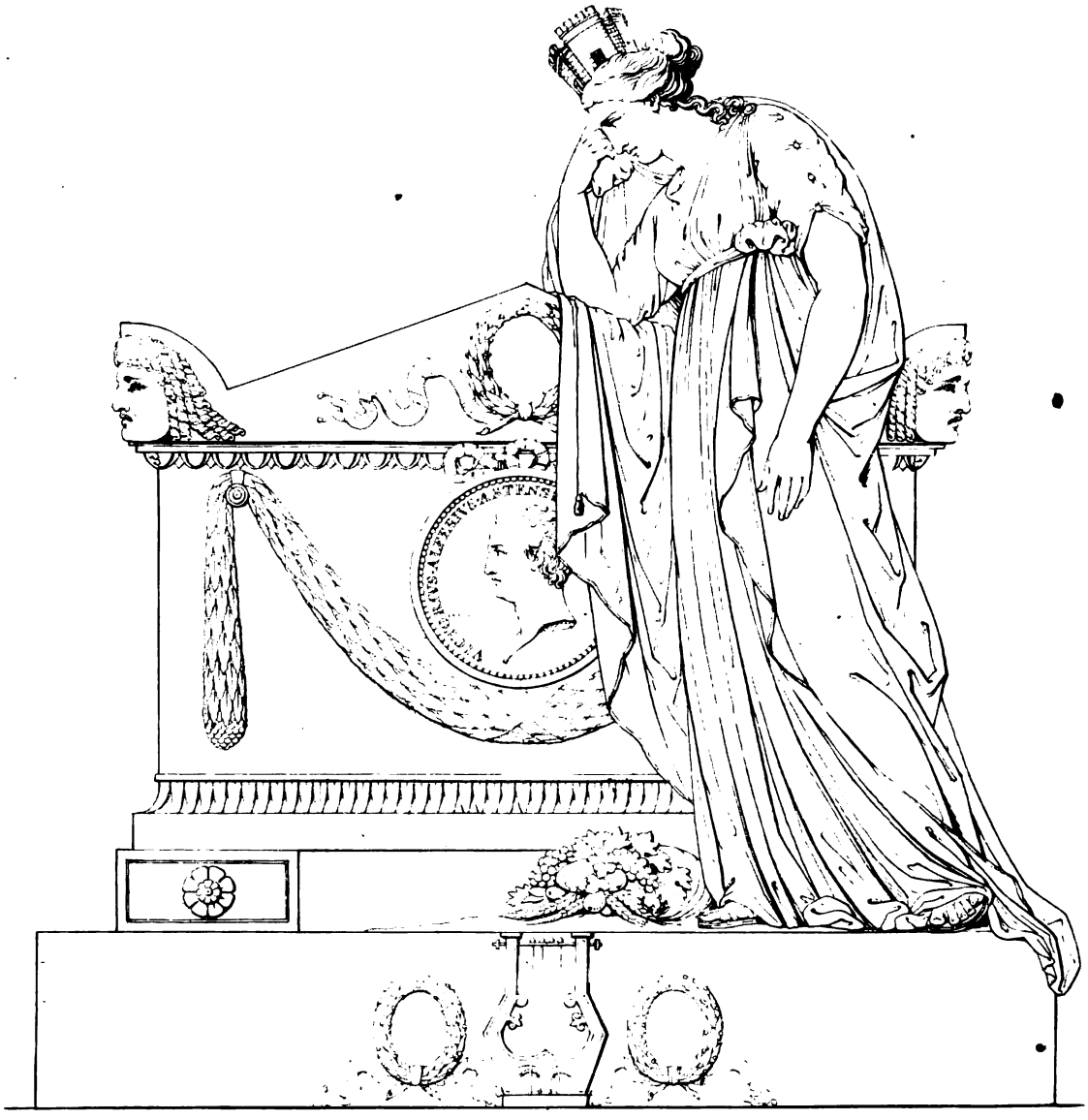
Digitized by Google

inevitable destiny of mortals, and the afflicting idea of surviving those who are dear to us. My heart is chilled by the thought, and with hasty steps I turn to quit the spot; but a feeling that some tribute is due besides that which my heart has silently paid arrests me, and tearing hastily from my head a wreath of living roses, I place it with a sigh at the foot of the mournful urn.

Ah! sugli estinti
Non sorge fiore, ove non sia d'umane
Lodi onorato, e d'amoroso pianto.

Foscolo, I Sepolcri.

Digitized by Google



MONUMENT OF VITTORIO ALFIERI.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT

OF

VITTORIO ALFIERI.

(IN MARBLE.)

To honor the memory of a beloved object, who is torn from us by death, either by the inspired voice of poetry or by splendid monuments, where he seems to continue to live and to hold intercourse with us, has been, in all ages, the highest gratification, and dearest illusion of noble and impassioned minds; whether they held death to be an eternal parting, or cherished the soothing idea of meeting again after a temporary separation.

The excellent Countess of Albany, whose name commands the love and respect of every one, had the consolation, in her deep affliction at the death of the Count Alfieri, of transmitting his name to posterity, with an additional claim to immortality, by raising a monument to his memory, the work of the great Canova; and may the names, so honored by their country, of Alfieri and of Canova, thus united,

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT OF GIOVANNI VOLPATO.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT

OF

GIOVANNI VOLPATO.

(BASSO RELIEVO IN MARBLE.)

FRIENDSHIP! Gratitude! pure and noble sentiments! ye inspired Canova in the composition of this monument, which expresses all your gentleness and affection.

Resting against a plain marble slab, surmounted by an elegant cornice, is the column upon which is placed the bust of Giovanni Volpato, a celebrated engraver, and Canova's most affectionate friend. His features are traced with all that truth and precision which belong to this great artist, prompted as he was by the deepest regret for his departed friend, to transmit his exact image to posterity; on the column we read the following inscription :—

IOH. VOLPATO. ANT. CANOVO, QUOD. SIBI. AGENTI. AN. XXV. CLEM. XIV. P. M. SEPUL. FAC. LOCAVERIT. PROBAVERITQUE AMICO. OPTIMO. MNEMOSINON. DE. ARTE. SUA. POS.

A beautiful wreath of flowers adorns the bust, and the

Digitized by Google

upper part of the column. Opposite to the bust is seated a young and beautiful female weeping, in an attitude of such tender and devoted regret, that she seems to say, *Here will I remain with thee for ever.* She is clothed in a double Grecian vest, with the border of which, gathered in her left hand, she dries her streaming eyes, while the other hand is resting listlessly on her lap.

The profile of this interesting figure is seen by the spectator bent slightly forward, and in an attitude of the deepest affliction; near to her, on the tablet, is inscribed AMICITIA! and never did imagination embody a form so worthy of the dear and sacred name of friendship as this, which Canova, prompted by his own affectionate heart, has sculptured here.

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT OF THE COUNT DE SOUZA.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT OF COUNT DE SOUZA.

(BASSO RELIEVO IN MARBLE.)

ALTHOUGH the numerous funereal monuments of this celebrated artist usually consist only of a bust, a female figure, and a few emblematical devices, yet his fertile genius has so varied these scanty materials as to give a wonderful originality to each of them.

That of which I have now to speak, in the hope of aiding the imagination of those who have never seen the original, is the tomb of the Count de Souza, a Portuguese nobleman, and consists of a large and highly ornamented marble slab, from which rises, in high relief, a fluted column, serving as the pedestal, on which is placed a bust of the Count, whose features yet seem to belong to the season of health and vigour; from his neck there hangs down a wreath of roses, a flower which the susceptible and imaginative Greeks have chosen to express, by its early charm and short-lived beauty, the fleeting lustre of human existence. Pity is personified in the female figure that is seated opposite to the bust, and bending forward in an attitude of deep affliction; her neglected tresses are simply

Digitized by Google

gathered together at the crown of her head, falling back in short and irregular ringlets, and her ample drapery possesses all the richness and natural flow of antiquity; but it is the expression of sweetness and ingenuousness in her aspect, mingled with her grief, which mosts affects us in the interesting figure, inspiring perfect confidence and sympathy, and inviting us irresistibly, to partake of all her feelings and afflictions.

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT OF GIOVANNI FALIER.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT OF GIOVANNI FALIER.

The inscription engraven on this monument, tells us that it was raised to the memory of Giovanni Falier, a Venetian noble, and at the same time records the close and affectionate ties by which our sculptor was united to him; and the deep emotions of sorrow and gratitude with which Canova traced the revered features of his earliest patron and friend, are very evident in this impassioned work. The countenance of Falier is animated although serene, and expresses that elevated and tranquil state of mind which the consciousness of pure and exalted motives can bestow. We may, perhaps, imagine, from the complacency which beams on his countenance, that his mind reposes on the pleasing retrospect of the early and affectionate interest which he took in the advancement of young Antonio (as he was familiarly called by this excellent man), who was afterwards to confer so much honour on his country; and Nature, as if to reward his generous patron in a way the most gratifying to a heart like his, seems to have prolonged his existence, in order to let him witness his high and universal celebrity. Gratitude is personified in the form of a weeping female of a dig-

Digitized by Google

nified demeanour, who is sitting opposite to the bust, and leaning her forehead against its base, with an air of the deepest and sincerest affliction; her person is folded in pure and delicate drapery, leaving uncovered only the right arm and the hand, which, placed on the capital of the column, serves as a support to her head.

The expression of her form and countenance is admirably in unison with the melancholy sentiment which the subject inspires. Our first impulse is to speak consolation to this interesting mourner; but subdued by our sympathy, and unwilling to disturb the exercise of so deep and amiable a feeling, we choose rather to remain and mingle our sorrow with hers.

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT OF FREDERIC WILLIAM PRINCE

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT

OF

FREDERICK PRINCE OF ORANGE.

(BASSO RELIEVO IN MARBLE.)

——— " Ah! non e' solo
" Per gli estinti la tomba!"

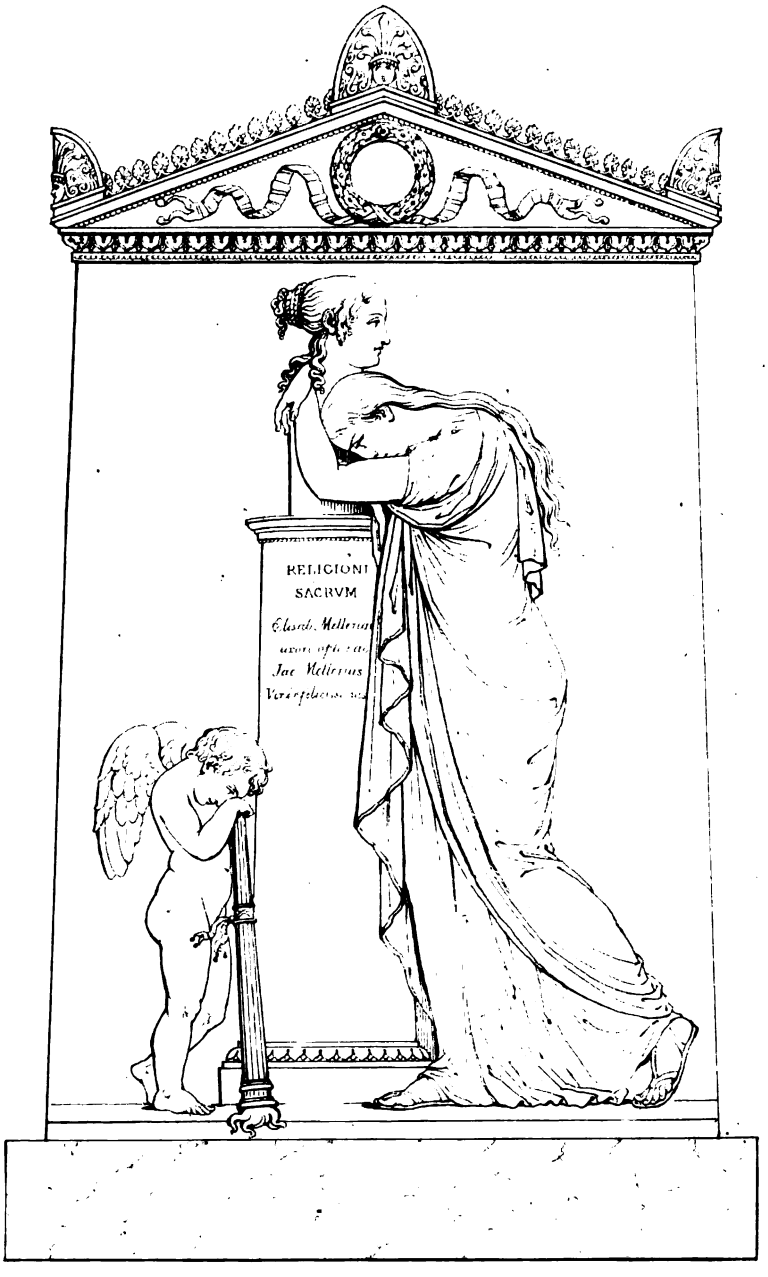
THE emblematical parts of this monument indicate that it is the tribute of affectionate relatives, and also allude to the rank and condition of the departed. The first is expressed by the stork, which was revered by the ancients for the care which it is said to take of its aged parents; and hence, by a happy allusion, the figure of this bird was always symbolical with them of the love of parents and relatives. The figure of the stork in this basso relievo is sculptured with great delicacy and truth. The weeping female is a fine and impassioned figure; she seems wholly abandoned to lasting grief—every feature expresses the most devoted sorrow, particularly the lips, which are slightly separated, and recall to our imagination the celebrated statue of her whom grief converted to a stone. The deep feelings of sympathy which so lively an expression of sorrow creates, is attempered by our

Digitized by Google

admiration of her exquisite form and finely proportioned limbs, which seem to have all the softness and vivid appearance of reality. Fain would I see restored the pious and venerable customs of the ancients, in respect to the honours paid to the dead by sacred rites, and the splendours of the tomb. Unlike the spirit of the present age, when we see the magnificent arches under which our fathers reposed violated and despoiled, and their sacred ashes disturbed—the marbles, sculptured with the symbols of their virtues, and dedicated to the eternal silence of the tomb, dragged from their sacred gloom, and profaned by the basest uses; these every where present themselves to our afflicted sight, and eloquently appeal against the barbarous apathy of the times. May we not hope, however, that the existence among us of so sublime a sculptor, whose immortal works possess all the influence of beauty, and all the humanizing effects of art, will awaken the better and more generous feelings of our nature, and counteract the influence of those fatal, political, and moral causes, which tend to brutalize and debase society.*

* Written in 1813.

Digitized by Google



MONUMENT OF THE COUNTESS MELLERIO.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT

OF

THE COUNTESS ELIZABETH MELLERIO.

This fine and empassioned group was imagined and sculptured by Canova to soothe the boundless grief of the Count Mellerio for the loss of his amiable and accomplished wife; well knowing that it is in vain to oppose the strong current of grief, and that the deeply afflicted refuse all consolation that does not tend to the indulgence of their wounded feelings. The bust of the deceased is placed upon a pedestal, which stands out from a marble tablet, ornamented with a rich cornice; the features are expressive of great serenity, and the hair is simply but gracefully arranged, leaving a few ringlets loose and falling down the neck. A tall and dignified figure, the allegorical representation of Pity, throwing her arms around the bust, rests her forehead against it with an air of devoted sorrow. She is wrapped in ample and elegant drapery, which leaves uncovered only her left arm and her delicate feet; her dishevelled hair falls down over her shoulders, and her whole appearance shews the listlessness of one

Digitized by Google

abandoned to grief. The countenances of both are seen in profile; the gentleness and serenity of the one contrasting strongly with the lively expression of grief of the other. A winged boy stands beside them, his face bent downwards and resting on his hand, which holds an inverted torch.

Since the melancholy event which this monument records, the Count Mellerio has been visited by another affliction, than which none can more deeply wound a father's heart—the death of a beloved and only daughter; an accumulation of sorrow that will call for a new exercise of Canova's genius.

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT OF THE COUNT GIO BATTISTA MELLERIO.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT

OF

THE COUNT GIO. BATTISTA MELLERIO.

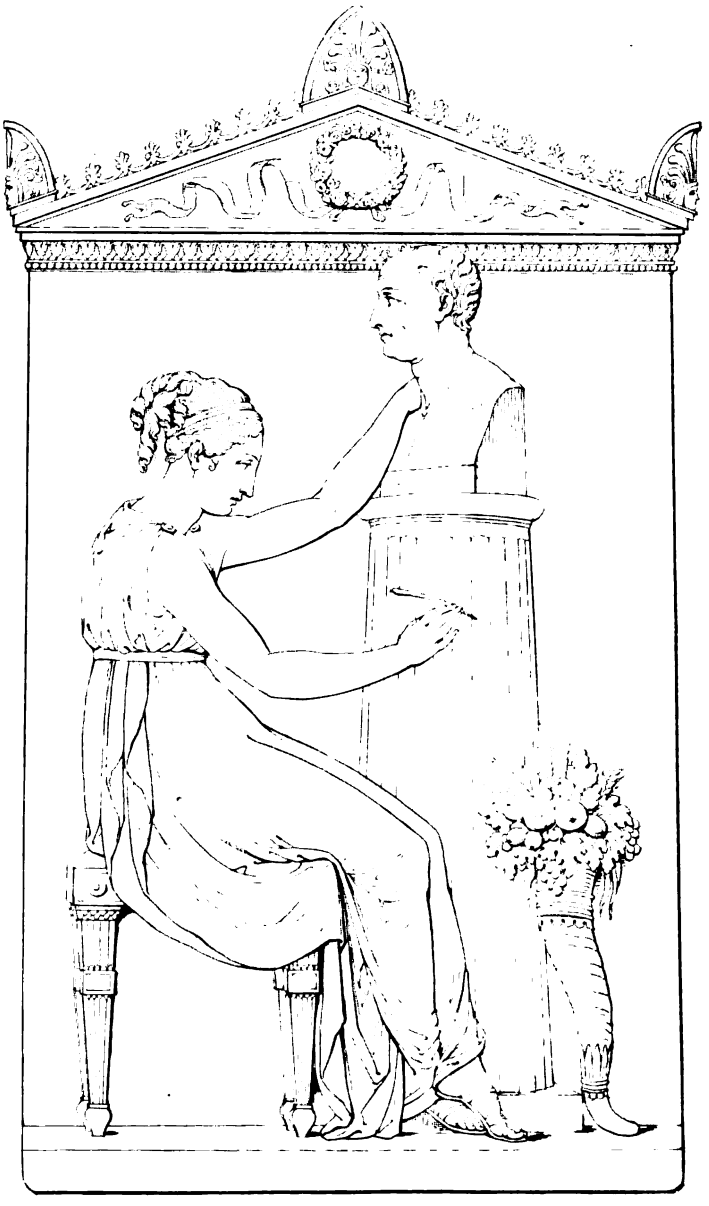
(ALTO-RELIEVO IN MARBLE.)

THERE will be found, I am aware, in the descriptions of several monuments of which I have spoken, an uniformity which does not in any degree exist in the originals themselves.

This simple monument consists of a tablet of polished marble, against which is placed a pedestal supporting an urn, consecrated to the memory of the Count Gio. Battista Mellerio; beside it is a weeping female, absorbed in profound affliction; her tall and elegant person is clothed in long and pliant drapery, which does not, however, wholly conceal the fine symmetry of her form; her feet also, which are uncovered, are exquisitely beautiful; bending over and resting her forehead on the urn, she clasps it to her breast with a mournful and impassioned air, that strongly excites the sympathy of the beholder.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



MONUMENT OF COUNT OTTAVIO TRENTO

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT

OF

COUNT OTTAVIO TRENTO.

(BASSO-RELIEVO IN MARBLE.)

OCTAVIO. TRENTO. COM. EQ. CORON. FERR.
POSTREMO. GENTIS. SVAE. VIRO. BENEFICENTISSIMO
QVI. DOMVI. PLEBI. AERVMNOSAE. ASPERIVDAE
INGENTEM. VIM. PECVNIAE. VIRVS. MORIENSQVE
ADSIGNAVIT
X. VIRI. REI. SVBSIDIARIAE. ADMINISTRANDAE
ET. CVRATORES. TESTAMENTI. ET. HAEREDES
PER. ANTONIVM. CANOVAM. HONORIS. CAVSSA. F.
QVO. IS. LOCO. EX. INDVLGENTIA. PRINCIPIS. CONDITVS. EST
VIXIT. A. LXXXIII. DECESSIT. K. MAIIS. A. MDCCCXXII.

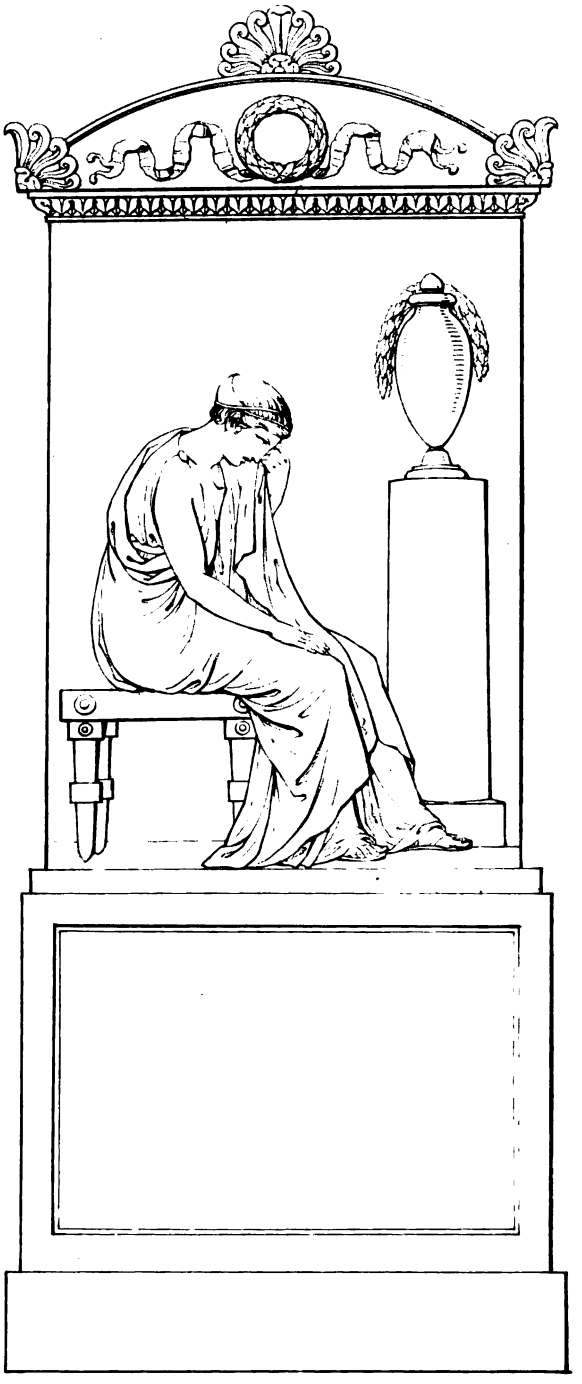
THIS inscription informs us of the noble origin of this monument, and the circumstances under which it was placed in the charitable asylum which bears the name of its illustrious founder. This simple and unostentatious tomb consists of a marble slab, crowned with an elegant cornice, against which is placed a fluted column, supporting the bust of Count Ottavio Trento, a nobleman of Vicenza, whose features bespeak the gentleness and beneficence of his disposition. Opposite to the bust is seated a female of a noble and engaging aspect; it is Felicity, who resting one hand on his shoulder with a gentle and affectionate action, with the other inscribes on the column the virtues of the deceased.

Digitized by Google

Canova, whose animated marbles evince his command over the most minute and secret affections of our nature, has expressed in her countenance the satisfaction with which she records to posterity an action which does the highest honor to the memory of the Count, who, unwilling to delay, until the last, the exercise of his benevolent intentions, devoted while living a portion of his substance to charitable purposes, and had the exquisite gratification of beholding the happiness of those whom he had relieved from the effects of chilling poverty and of age, and supplied for the remainder of their days with a tranquil and secure retreat.

" Nè già conforto sol, ma scuola ancora
Sono a chi vive i monumenti tristi
Di chi disparve."

Digitized by Google



MONUMENT OF COUNT TADINI.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT

OF THE COUNT FAUSTO TADINI.

(ALTO-RELIEVO IN MARBLE.)

This simple monument was erected to the memory of Count Fausto Tadini, and records a singular and melancholy event. His father, the Count Luigi Tadini, a Cremonese of high rank, began the building of a palace at Zovare, which he intended for the residence of this his only son, who was then in the flower of his age, and was soon to have been married: beloved by his parents, and favoured by the Muses, inspired by whom, he had written elegant verses in praise of the productions of Canova's chisel. One day, while observing with his parents the progress of the work, his careful mother thinking the spot dangerous where he stood, wished him to remove to one more secure; attentive to her will, he left the place of apparent danger for one of more seeming security, when suddenly a part of the building gave way, and buried him beneath its ruins.

Digitized by Google

The horror of his mother, at the moment of seeing a beloved child crushed to death before her eyes, can be known only by a mother's heart: senseless and motionless she remained, as this marble figure which Canova's affection for the unfortunate family prompted him to make in eternal remembrance of this afflicting event. The noble edifice was afterwards converted into a sacred chapel, in which the mangled remains were deposited, and where this monument now stands. It is in high-relief, rising from a marble slab which is ornamented with a very elegant cornice; upon a column serving as a pedestal, is placed a cinerary vase, such as among the Greeks was devoted to the service of the dead; on the top is a wreath of flowers falling down on both sides; in the front this short inscription, CINERES FAUSTINI TADINI; opposite to the vase, on an unadorned seat, is a female figure, who appears sunken in unconsolable sorrow; she is clothed in a tunic, and wears over that a plain mantle, leaving uncovered her right arm only, which has fallen abandonedly on her lap; the left holds up the border of her mantle to her face, which it partly conceals; the eye which is seen, is half closed, as if the eye-lid had been sunken by long weeping. The features of the unhappy mother which Canova has preserved

Digitized by Google

in this mournful figure, adds, inexpressibly, to our sympathy. On the tablet beneath is the following inscription, LIBERA COM. MORONATI TADINI MATER MŒRENTISSIMA.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE DEATH

OF PRIAM.

Engraved by Henry Moses

Digitized by Google

THE DEATH OF PRIAM.

(BASSO RELIEVO, A MODEL.)

This deeply affecting event is here represented by Canova in a manner closely corresponding with the description of it, which Virgil has given in the second book of the Æneid.

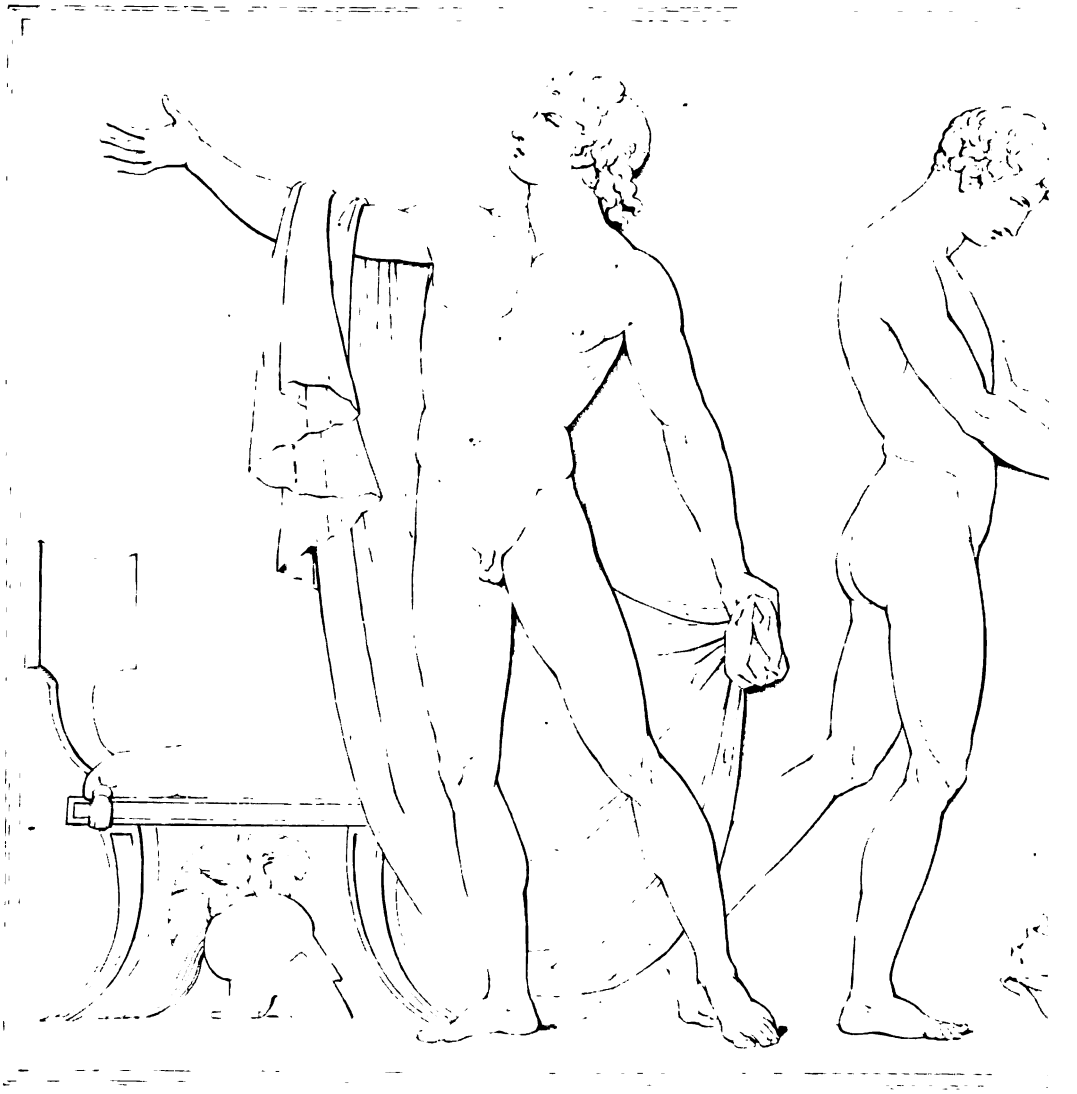
The scene is a court in the palace of Priam. On one side we see the altar sacred to his family gods, and the aged laurel, whose thick-leaved branches spread a sheltering canopy over them. To this sanctuary the unhappy Hecuba had fled, surrounded by her daughters, like doves scared by the sudden tempest; and here, while the shouts of the victorious Greeks, and the shrieks of the dying gather round them, clinging to the altar, they vainly supplicated their gods for protection. And here, too, the youthful Polytes, whose body lies stretched upon the ground, wounded, and closely pursued by Pyrrhus, had fled for refuge; and falling bleeding on the pavement, expired before the eyes of his parents. The sculptor has taken that point of time when the fierce son of Achilles having seized the venerable Priam by his locks, is dragging him towards the altar, and in the act of plunging a dagger into

Digitized by Google

his breast. Overwhelmed by the sight, Hecuba, already exhausted by grief and suffering, falls senseless into the arms of an attendant. Near to the king a young female, whose vehement grief bespeaks her his daughter, has fallen on her knees, and extending her arms distractedly towards heaven, invokes the aid of the gods. A group of females, one of whom clasps an infant in her arms, seems struck with horror and affright, and try to save themselves by precipitate flight. On the other side of the altar two daughters of Priam rush with frantic grief towards the son of Achilles, and uttering shrieks for mercy try to arrest his arm. He, heedless of their cries, and dragging his victim up the steps of the altar, seems only actuated by brutal fury and revenge. In that dark and obdurate countenance I see expressed all the horrors that befel the house of Priam on that disastrous day.

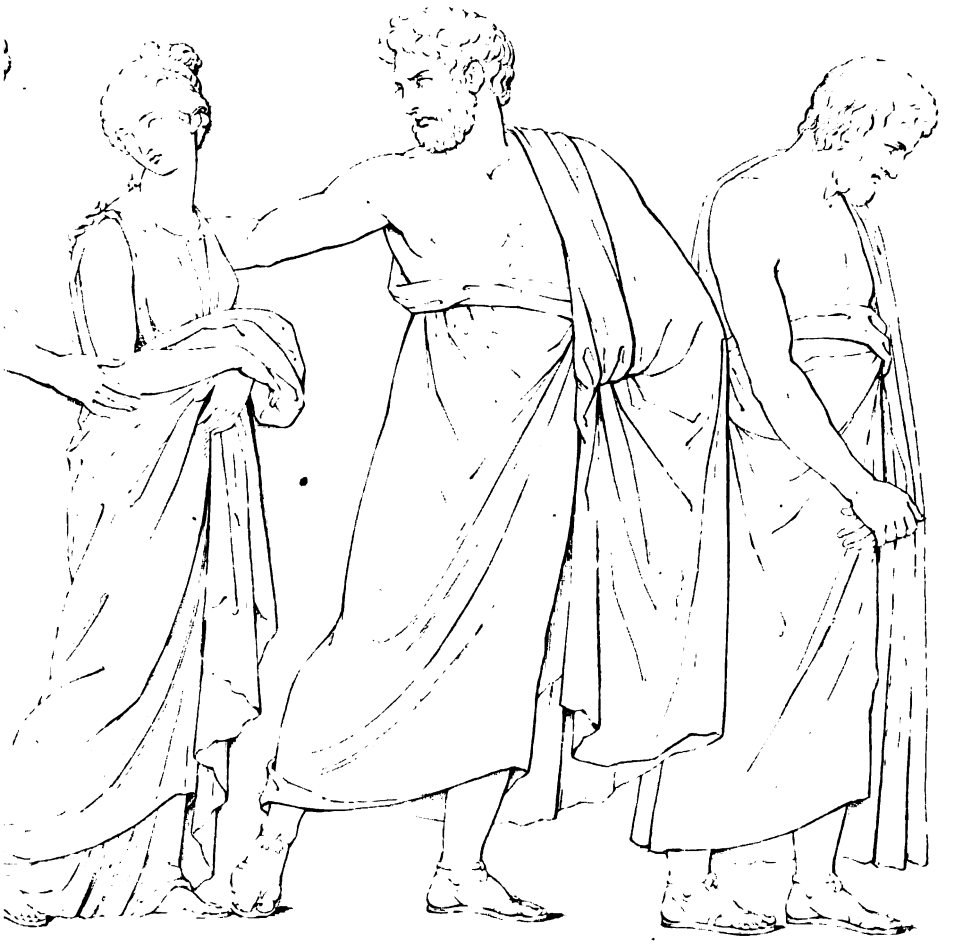
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



BRISEIS DELIVERE

Digitized by Google



) TO THE HERALDS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BRISEIS

CONSIGNED TO THE HERALDS BY PATROCLUS.

(A BASSO RELIEVO; A MODEL.)

THE subject of this basso relievo, consisting of five figures only, is one of the most interesting events of the Iliad, and revives in our memory the whole of that eventful story. It was the cause of the subsequent disasters of the Greeks at that famous siege, which, in the end, was almost equally fatal to the conquerors and to the conquered. In the allurements of beauty originated the events recorded in that divine poem, and no one has so well as Homer expressed its resistless power: this he produced not by describing each particular charm, but by recounting its mighty effects: for when we read that the loss of Briseis was the cause of the boundless and fatal anger of Achilles, and of so many misfortunes to the Greeks, the excited imagination invests her with infinite and irresistible attractions.

The story is told with admirable simplicity and

Digitized by Google

effect. Eurybates and Talthybius, the faithful heralds of Agamemnon, are conducting the lovely Briseis from the tent of Achilles. One of the heralds precedes the rest, his hands clasped in each other, with the downcast look of one who revolves in his mind the forebodings of heavy calamities. The other, of a firmer aspect, observes the hesitating fair one, and passing his arm lightly round her shoulders, courteously urges her departure. She, gathering up her dress before her, with a graceful action follows the herald, but with slow, reluctant steps, and is looking back on her beloved Achilles, as if to bid a last farewell, or, seeing his fury, to indulge the hope of speedy vengeance; for the female heart is capable, in the case of mother, wife, or mistress, of the deepest and most uncontrollable feelings; and the thoughts of vengeance, which readily rise in their susceptible minds, are a necessary relief to the boundless sensibility of their hearts.

Patroclus follows Briseis, and, well aware of the resistless power of those dangerous charms, gently urges her to yield to necessity, and by her departure allay the fury of Achilles. The attitude of the hero, inflamed both by anger and by love, expresses the most vehement rage; grasping in his left hand the folds of his dress, he raises the right energetically towards heaven, as if accusing it of the injustice

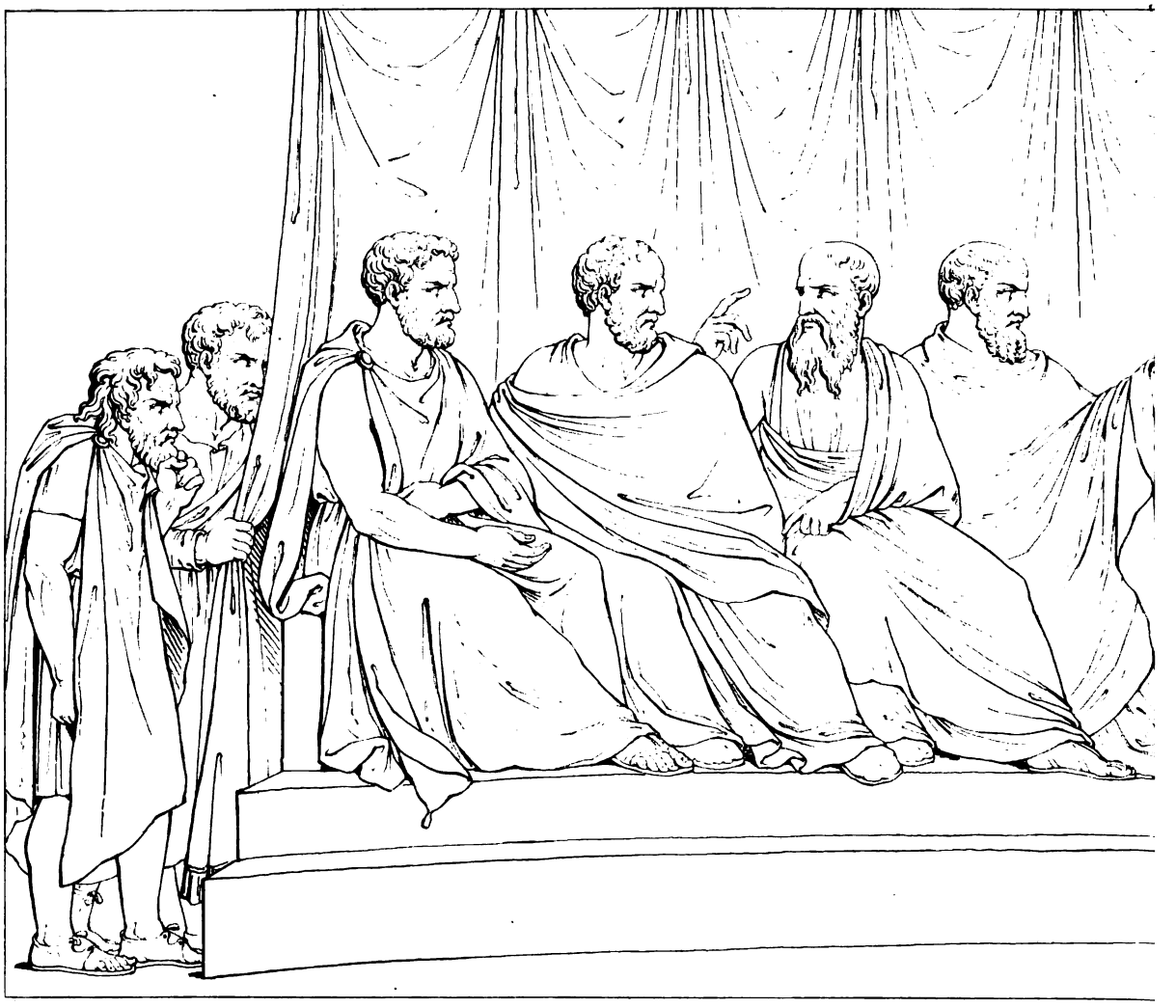
Digitized by Google

which he has suffered, and imprecating the fullest vengeance on its author. The figures of Achilles and of Patroclus, both distinguished by manly beauty, but differing in character as the offspring of a goddess, and of a mortal mother, correspond fully with the descriptions handed down to us by antiquity of these illustrious friends, who, by the faithfulness and constancy of their mutual affection, have well merited that their great names should be consecrated as a symbol of the purest and most precious gift of heaven—of sacred friendship!

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



SOCRATES DEFENDING HIM

SELF BEFORE HIS JUDGES.

Digitized by Google

SOCRATES

DEFENDING HIMSELF BEFORE HIS JUDGES.

(BASSO RELIEVO; A MODEL.)

THIS fine composition, which represents the virtuous Socrates defending himself against the calumnies of his enemies, excites the liveliest emotions within us; the familiar features of the principal personages in this group, and the truth and force with which their various passions are expressed, give an air of reality to the whole scene; we become the spectators of it, and feel, with the disciples, the deepest anxiety for his safety. The genius of Canova, raised by this noble subject, has given a sublime expression to the well-known features of the philosopher. Wearing a short mantle, falling off his right shoulder, as it was usual with him, he occupies the middle of the group, and confronts his accusers; close behind him is Alcibiades, the next is Xenophon; a little further back, Plato, Crito, and Euripides, forming a fine group; and lastly, Critobulus, the youthful son of Crito: at

Digitized by Google

the opposite extremity of the basso relievo stand his accusers, Anytus and Melitus. The intermediate space is filled by his judges, who are seated on a raised bench; their attentions are closely fixed on the philosopher, and their animated looks and gestures show the various passions by which they are actuated.

The artist has taken that point of time when Socrates, hearing himself charged with the denying the existence of the gods, rises out of the state of tranquillity and almost indifference in which he had until then remained, and raising his right hand, and looking towards heaven, he exclaims, "Truly, O Athenians! I do believe in the immortal gods, to whom I now appeal in testimony of the truths which here I swear to upon this altar, that I have ever consecrated to them." The accompanying motion of his left hand, which presses energetically against his heart, gives force and clearness to this eloquent appeal: while he utters these words, Alcibiades, wholly occupied by the danger of his master, unconsciously moves towards him. Xenophon, restraining his indignation, with difficulty bends forward, and casts a menacing glance on his accusers. Plato is distinguishable from his dignified and expressive aspect, his ample forehead, and the elegant arrangement of his dress and hair; standing imperturbably with his hands folded before him in his mantle, he observes the passing events

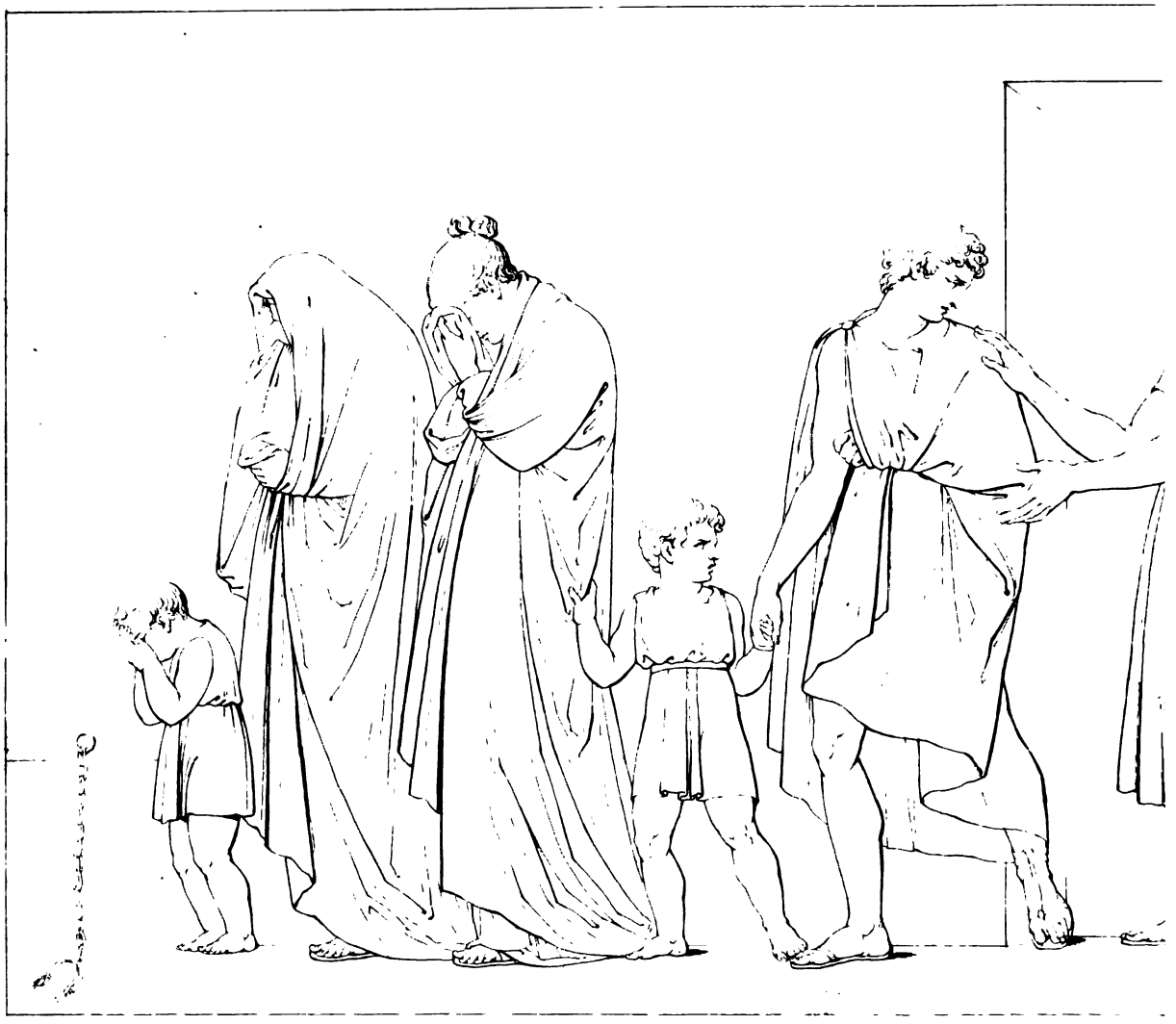
Digitized by Google

with the most fixed attention. The countenance of Crito, the most devoted of his friends, although deeply marked with grief, yet shews that hope is not entirely abandoned by him. In the deeply meditative aspect of the next figure we recognize the philosophic poet Euripides, who is skilfully placed in this illustrious group; and lastly, the youthful Critobulus, his features indicating all the susceptibility of his age. The figures of Anytus and Melitus, on the contrary, are strongly expressive of their perfidious natures; the former, however, appears to feel some degree of remorse, and partly conceals his face behind the arras; while Melitus, although trembling at the invocation of Socrates, still seems actuated by the blackest passions. Among the judges a variety of emotions appear to prevail,—grief, astonishment, and admiration in some, but in others a determined disposition to condemn the accused. And accordingly he was condemned to death. The deep contrition of his countrymen, the entire destruction of his enemies, nor the ample honours paid to his memory, can ever efface from the characters of the Athenians the deep stain of that atrocious sentence.

Digitized by Google

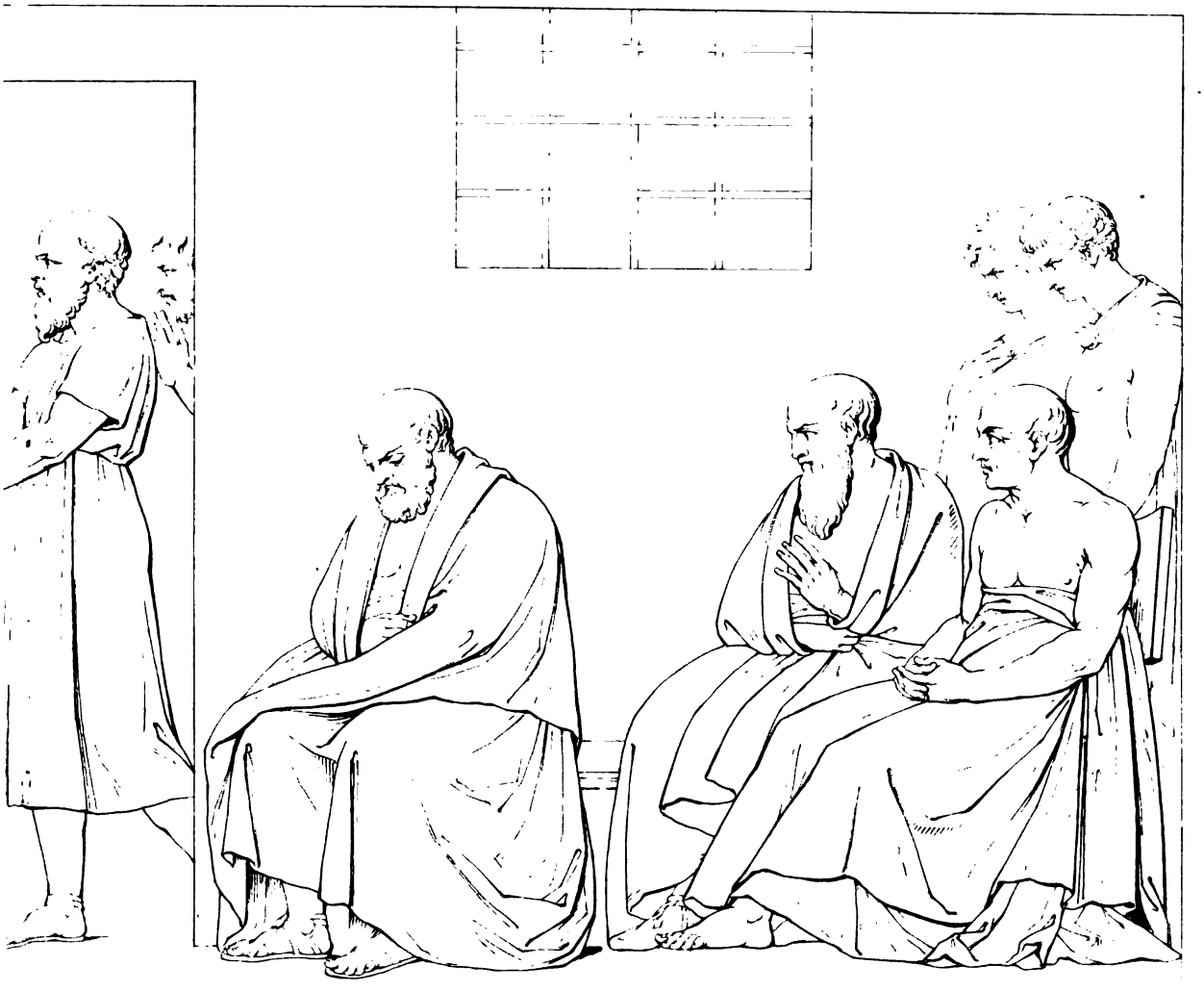
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



SOCRATES SENDING AWAY HIS FAM

Digitized by Google



...ILY BEFORE DRINKING THE POISON.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

SOCRATES

SENDING AWAY HIS FAMILY BEFORE DRINKING THE POISON.

(BASSO RELIEVO, A MODEL.)

THIS deeply interesting subject is treated by Canova with a sensibility and elevation of mind that prove him worthy to be the interpreter of the great and virtuous Socrates. An air of solemnity and simplicity befitting the sad event which it represents, prevails throughout this admirable composition; it carries us at once into the midst of this affecting scene, and makes us acquainted with the feelings of all present. The philosopher is in the attitude of parting for the last time with his family, whom he sends away to save them the agony of seeing him die; we observe the stone to which he had been chained, and from which (melancholy presage) he has just been released: his wife and children, overwhelmed with affliction, are moving slowly and reluctantly away; his eldest son, Lamproclus, follows last, and seems unwilling to leave his venerated parent. Three of his friends,

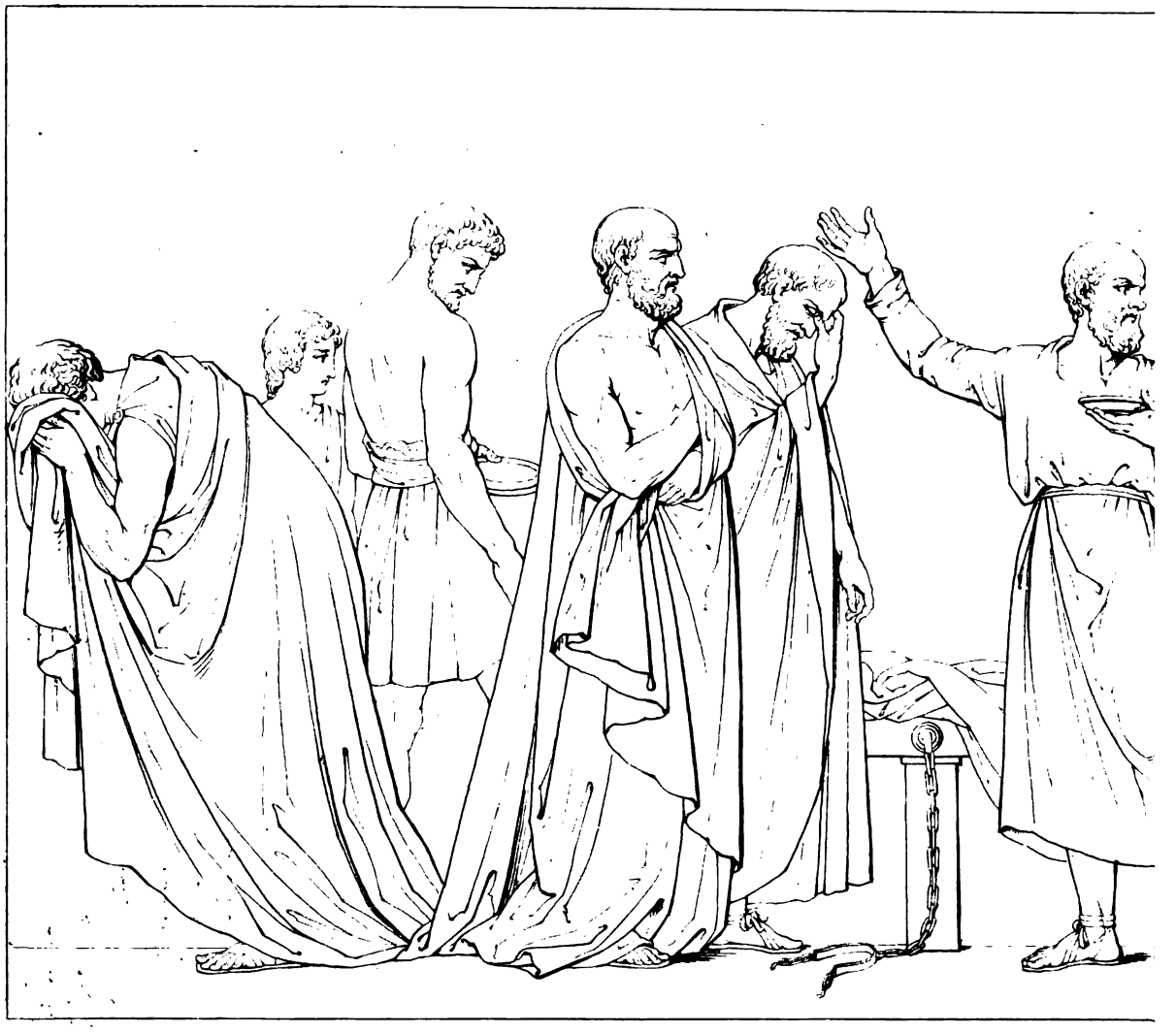
Digitized by Google

of unshaken constancy, who are seated apart watching this painful scene, appear equally penetrated with grief and with admiration; two youths, in attitudes expressive of sorrow, complete the group.

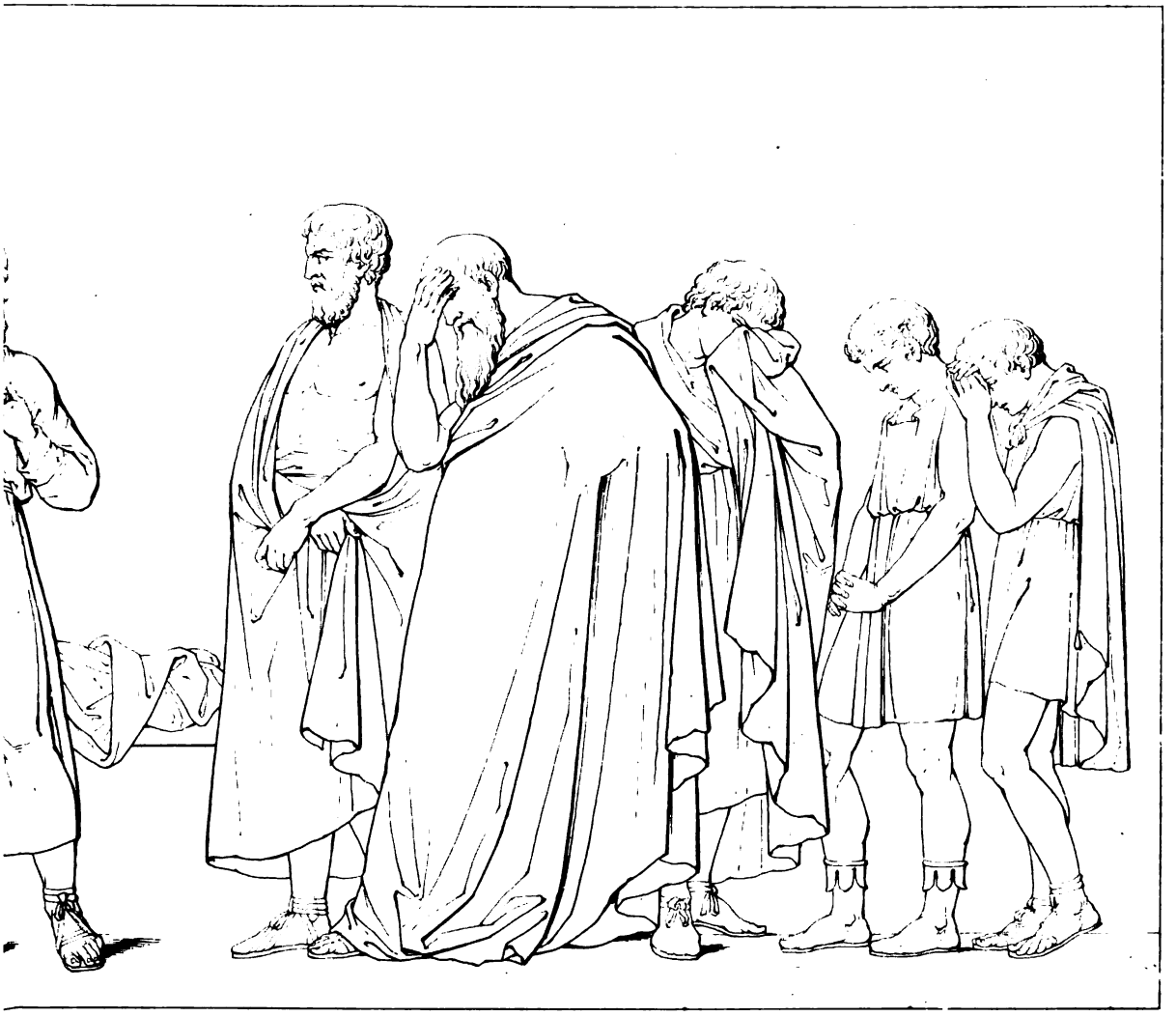
Among these Socrates alone preserves a calm and collected aspect; but if his countenance indicates no agitation of mind, yet the unconscious and eloquent action of his hands betray the struggle which exists within him; the motion of the left hand, which seems to urge his son to leave him, is languid and feeble; the other, which is a truer index of his feelings, is laid on his shoulder, as if willing to arrest his steps, and reveals the depressed but deep emotions of the warmest affections; all the feelings of a father's heart, and its inextinguishable claims, are expressed in that impassioned gesture.—Sacred feelings! I honor ye as the noblest part of our nature, while I turn with horror from the ferocious virtue which led a Brutus to neglect the unerring voice of nature, to sacrifice a son in fulfilment of a harsh and uncertain duty.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



SOCRATES DRINK



KING THE POISON.

Digitized by Google

SOCRATES

IN THE ACT OF DRINKING THE POISON.

(BASSO RELIEVO; A MODEL.)

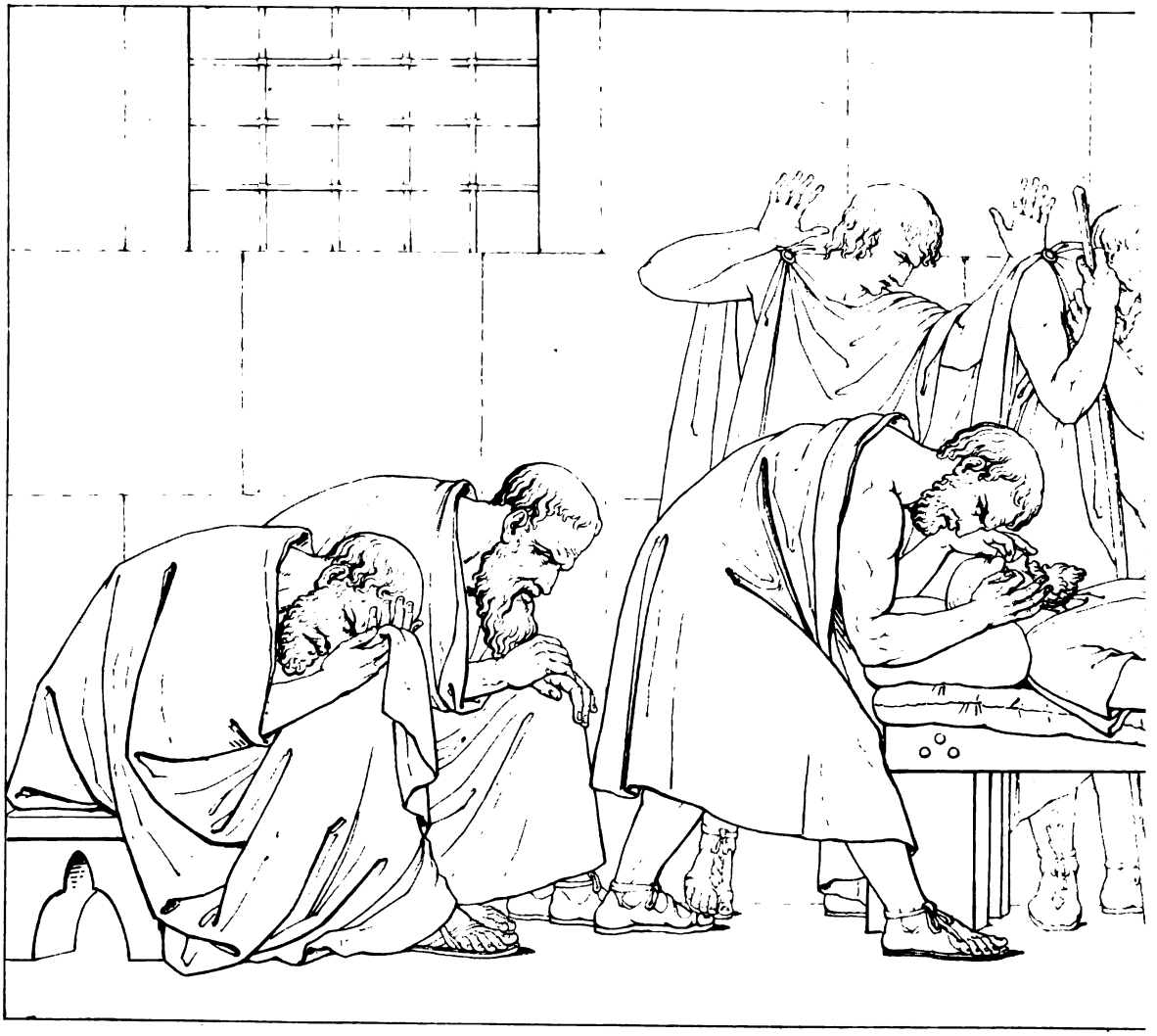
SOCRATES is here seen holding in his hand the fatal cup, and is about to drink the poison which it contains; his friends and disciples are standing around him, in attitudes expressive of deep sorrow and dejection. The figure of the philosopher, although of lower stature than the rest, is raised and distinguished by the dignity of his aspect, and the eloquent action of his right hand, which is lifted towards heaven, as if in the utterance of some sentiment to elevate and strengthen the faltering spirits of those around him. This noble and animated attitude expresses the firmness and perfect tranquillity which his soul maintained at the near approach of death. The affectionate Crito, unable to bear the afflicting sight, turns distractedly away, and hides his face in his mantle; even the jailor seems moved with pity and admiration. Socrates, by his dignified and expressive aspect,

Digitized by Google

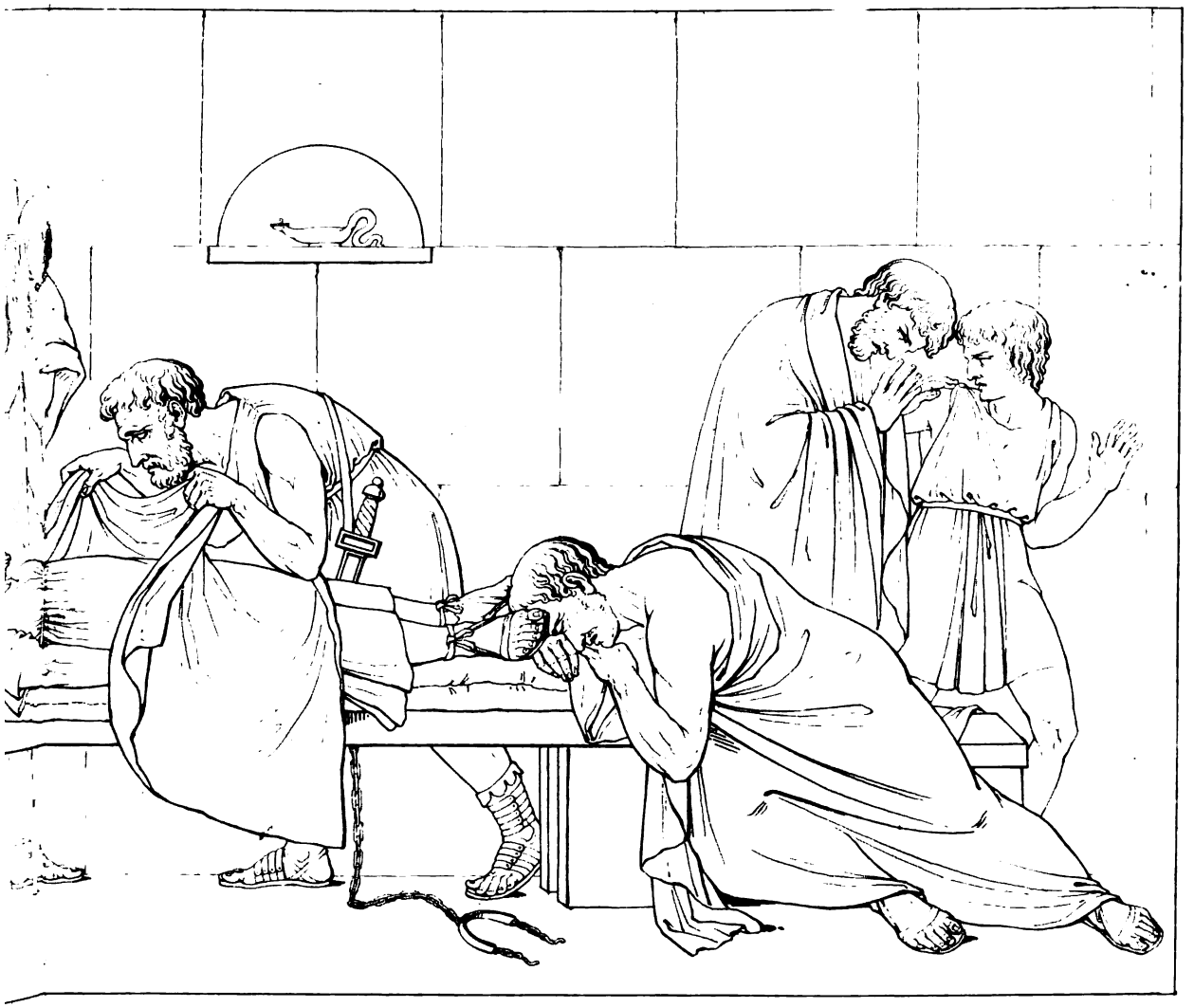
seems to upbraid his friends for their want of firmness, and to recall their thoughts to those lofty and animating hopes with which we should welcome death, as the auspicious entrance to a brighter and happier state of existence.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



THE DEATH



OF SOCRATES.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE DEATH OF SOCRATES.

(BASSO RELIEVO; A MODEL.)

THE last scene in the life of this great philosopher is the subject of the present basso relievo. The body of Socrates is lying extended on a rude couch or bier, in the same prison in which we have already seen him; his spirit has just quitted the mortal part, and his limbs appear not yet to have acquired the rigidity of death. The jailor, moved with unusual pity, raises gently the cloth which covers him, to ascertain if life yet remains. The affectionate Crito, overcoming for a moment his affliction, pays the last sad tribute of closing the eye-lids of his master; another disciple, abandoned to his grief, lies neglectedly with his head at the feet of the deceased. Two aged philosophers sit apart, and seem absorbed in deep and painful meditation; two others are standing gazing on the body, the younger raising his hands with a look expressive of grief and admiration, the other leaning on a staff, bends mournfully over it. At the extremity of the group, a youth who from the acute sorrow which his look evinces, is,

Digitized by Google

perhaps, Lamproclus, the son of Socrates, is gently urged to depart by a man of mature years. Every object which presents itself bespeaks the deep sense which his friends have of the loss sustained by them, and of the folly and ingratitude of his fellow-citizens, who should rather have earnestly besought Heaven to prolong a life so beneficial to themselves and to mankind.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

RETURN OF

Digitized by Google

TELEMACHUS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE RETURN OF TELEMACHUS.

(BASSO RELIEVO ; A MODEL.)

THE joyous acclamations of the people for the return of Telemachus, have already reached the royal palace, and penetrated to the apartments of the afflicted queen. She is seen descending with hasty steps to meet her son, who is pointed out to her by two damsels employed in preparing the hall for the reception of her suitors. The countenance and demeanour of Penelope possess that matronly dignity for which Homer has compared her to Diana. Her aspect and attitude express the deepest sorrow and inquietude at seeing him return unaccompanied by Ulysses, which seems for the moment to overpower the feelings of joy which the arrival of her son would have excited; but now every look and action seems to enquire for, and demand her absent lord.

Canova has shewn his profound knowledge of the most minute and complicated workings of the heart, by representing Penelope with the feelings of anxiety for her absent husband, preponderating over those of satisfaction at the sight of her son. He had departed solely for the purpose of seeking out his father; and

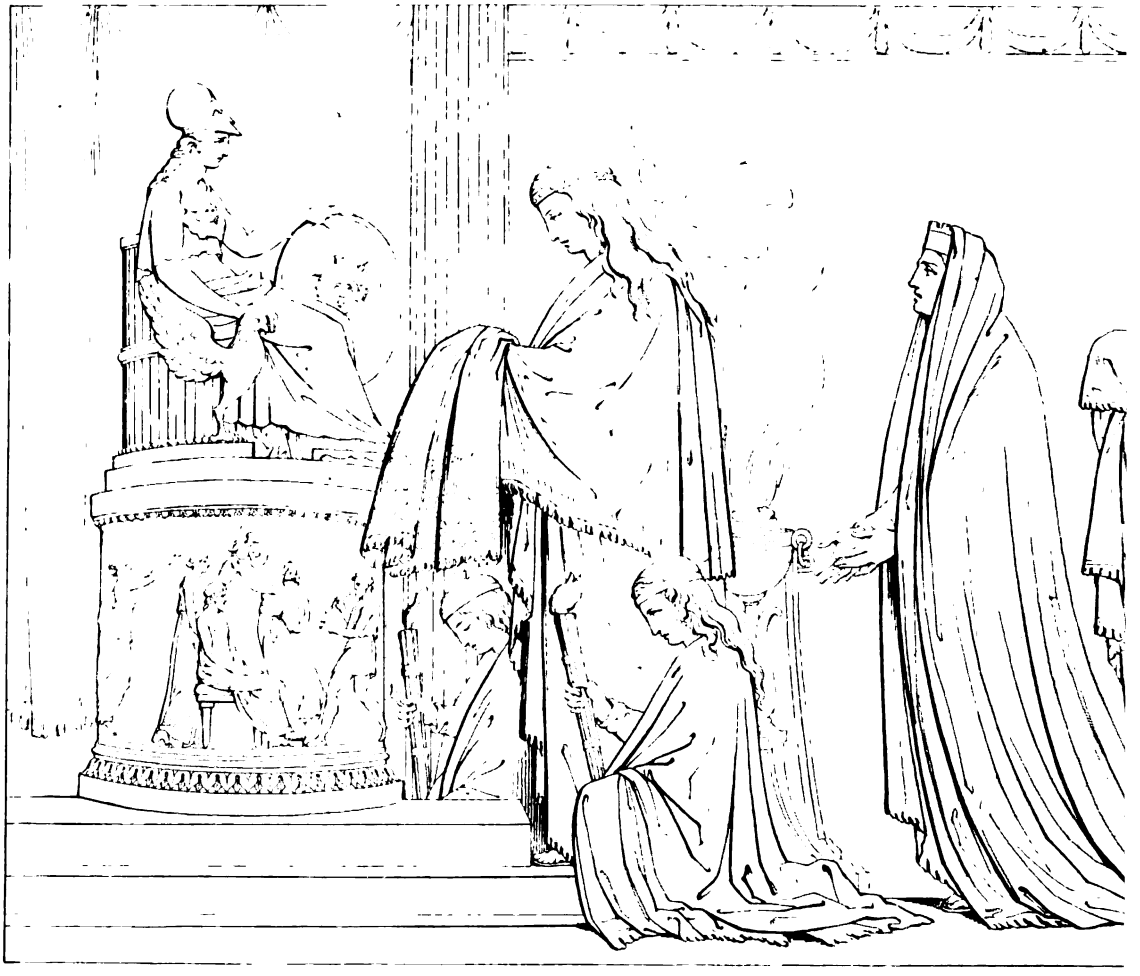
Digitized by Google

his return alone declares his search fruitless, and tends to excite a sudden feeling of grief and hopelessness. The presence of her son too has removed all doubts of his own safety, and leaves her heart to undivided sorrow for her husband's fate. Telemachus has thrown aside his spear, and is running affectionately towards his mother; but the fondness of Eureclea, who had been his nurse, arrests his progress; in the confused joy which the sight of him has occasioned, she kisses one of his arms, which she holds by both her hands, raising her eyes at the same time, and regarding him with that eager affection which the tender ties of foster-mother so naturally create.

Telemachus, while he abandons one arm to the faithful Eureclea, ardently extends the other towards his mother, with an action strongly expressive of filial emotion. A young damsel, attired with great simplicity, and of an artless and pleasing expression, is following him into the hall, and unseen by any one, bends down to kiss the border of his mantle; her attitude and manner of performing this secret act of fondness, shews that it springs from that sudden and spontaneous impulse which is the purest and most precious tribute of affection.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



THE OFFERING OF T

Digitized by Google

.E TROJAN MATRONS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE OFFERING

OF

THE TROJAN MATRONS.

Behold, in long and reverential procession, Hecuba and the Trojan Matrons in the act of supplicating Minerva. The august Goddess is seated on a throne, raised by several steps from the pavement, and ornamented with the subject of her extraordinary birth; kneeling before it are two young virgins, the initiated in the service of the Goddess, with burning torches in their hands.

"Benign Theano, Priestess of the Fane,"

goes before, bearing in her arms a mantle,

"Most prized for art, and labour'd o'er with gold,"

which Hecuba, moved by her beloved son, the valiant Hector, had selected as an offering to the deity. The queen herself comes next, with outstretched arms, and eyes raised towards heaven, like one invoking aid against some impending calamity. She is followed by a numerous train of Trojan matrons, whose appearances express the deepest affliction.

Digitized by Google

Two hands are seen stretched forward from behind, in a supplicatory attitude, and lead us to imagine, that many others are following and imploring heaven to succour their devoted country.

Although folded in long and ample veils which conceal their persons, their attitudes plainly reveal their distress, and denote the deepest gloom. What affliction, what silence, what devotion!—in the illusion of the moment, I fancy myself a supplicant also, and following in the train.

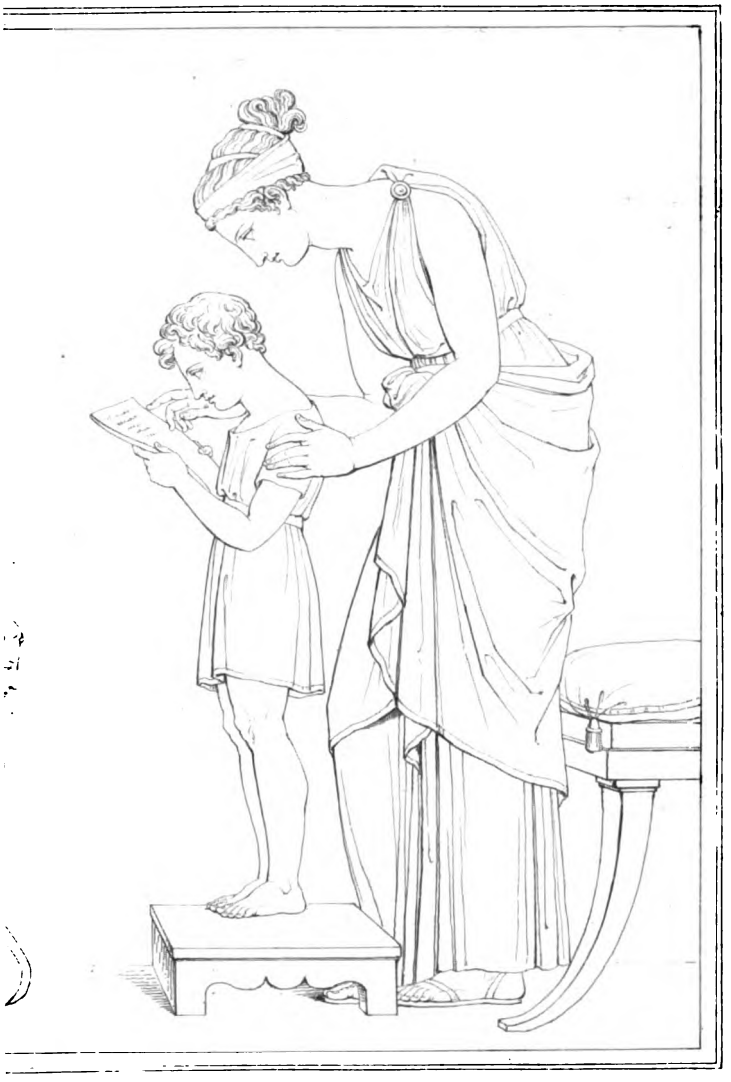
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

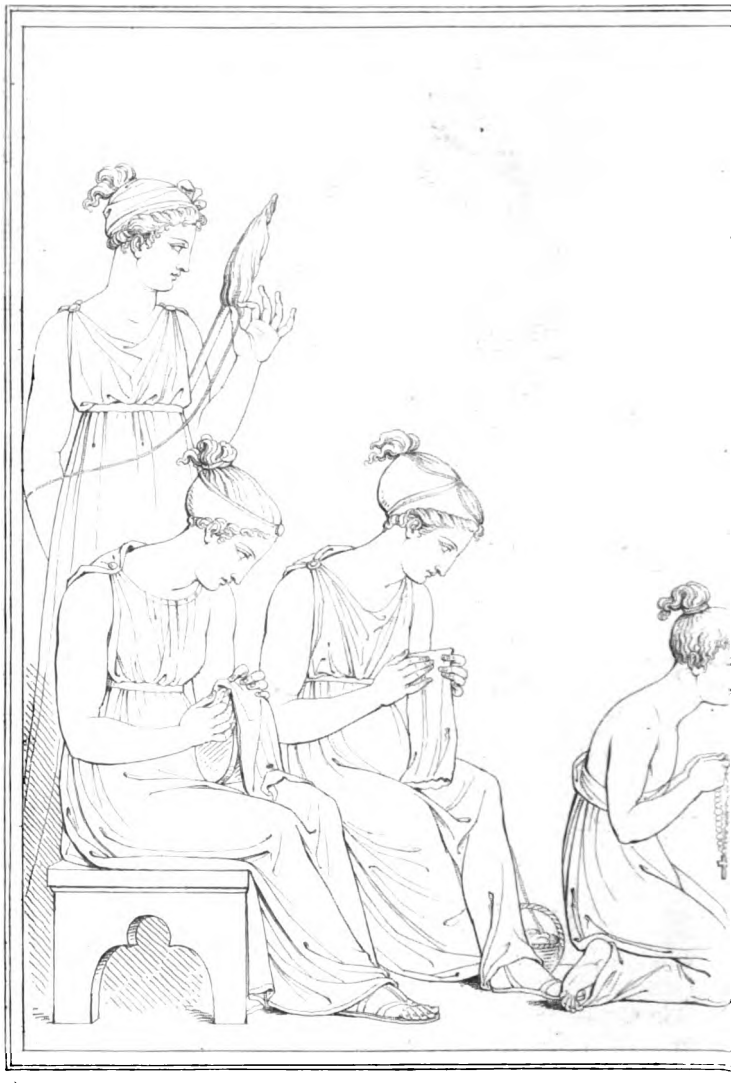
Antonio Canova Sculp.

INSTRI

Digitized by Google



CTION.



Antonio Canova Sculpt

INSTRU

Digitized by Google

Engraved by Henry Moses

CTION.

[illegible] 262 Strand.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

INSTRUCTION.

(BASSO RELIEVO ; A MODEL.)

A FEMALE attired with simplicity, and of a kind and tranquil aspect, has just risen from her seat, and is bending over, and in the act of instructing a little boy standing on a footstool before her. Their attention is strongly fixed upon a tablet which he holds, and on which she is pointing out his task with one hand, while the other rests upon his shoulder: opposite to them are three young females attired in the same simple manner, and all busily and usefully occupied, each bestowing the degree of attention which her respective work requires; in the centre of the piece a little girl is kneeling, in the attitude of prayer, and telling her beads, with an expression of devotion that impresses us with a favourable opinion of the piety of the kind instructress. The lower part only of the person of the young supplicant is clothed, leaving her slender back and shoulders uncovered; an agreeable simplicity, and that serenity which an useful occupation of time diffuses, are the charms of this edifying subject.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHA

Digitized by Google

Engraved by Henry Moses

RITY.

Lowell 269 Strand.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHARITY.

(BASSO RELIEVO; A MODEL.)

A YOUNG female, the allegorical representation of Charity, is here seen in the exercise of her benevolent offices; the gentleness of her aspect, and the complacency with which she performs these kind acts, strongly inspires in the beholder the same compassionate dispositions; the loose drapery in which she is wrapped seems to have been hastily thrown around her, in order to answer, without delay, the calls of the miserable; with her left arm she holds an infant pressed closely to her breast, while with the right she reaches a loaf of bread to a child who holds up both hands eagerly to receive it, with a look that at once expresses its want and its gratitude. The next that approaches is a youth, his eyes cast downwards, and in an humble attitude, leading a blind and aged supplicant, whose old and wasted limbs have only a coarse cloth wrapped round his loins for a covering; feeble from age and poverty, he leans heavily on his staff for support with one hand, and rests the other on the shoulder of his guide; his harsh and wrinkled features are softened by a look of thankfulness for the expected

Digitized by Google

alms. The delicate figure of Charity forms a strong contrast with those by whom she is surrounded. The purest and most exquisite gratifications are unknown to him who is a stranger to the exercise of charitable feelings, and the emotions of gratitude.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Canova Sculpt

VENUS DANCING

Digitized by Google

Engraved by James Mynes

ITH THE GRACES.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

VENUS DANCING WITH THE GRACES.

(BASSO RELIEVO; A MODEL.)

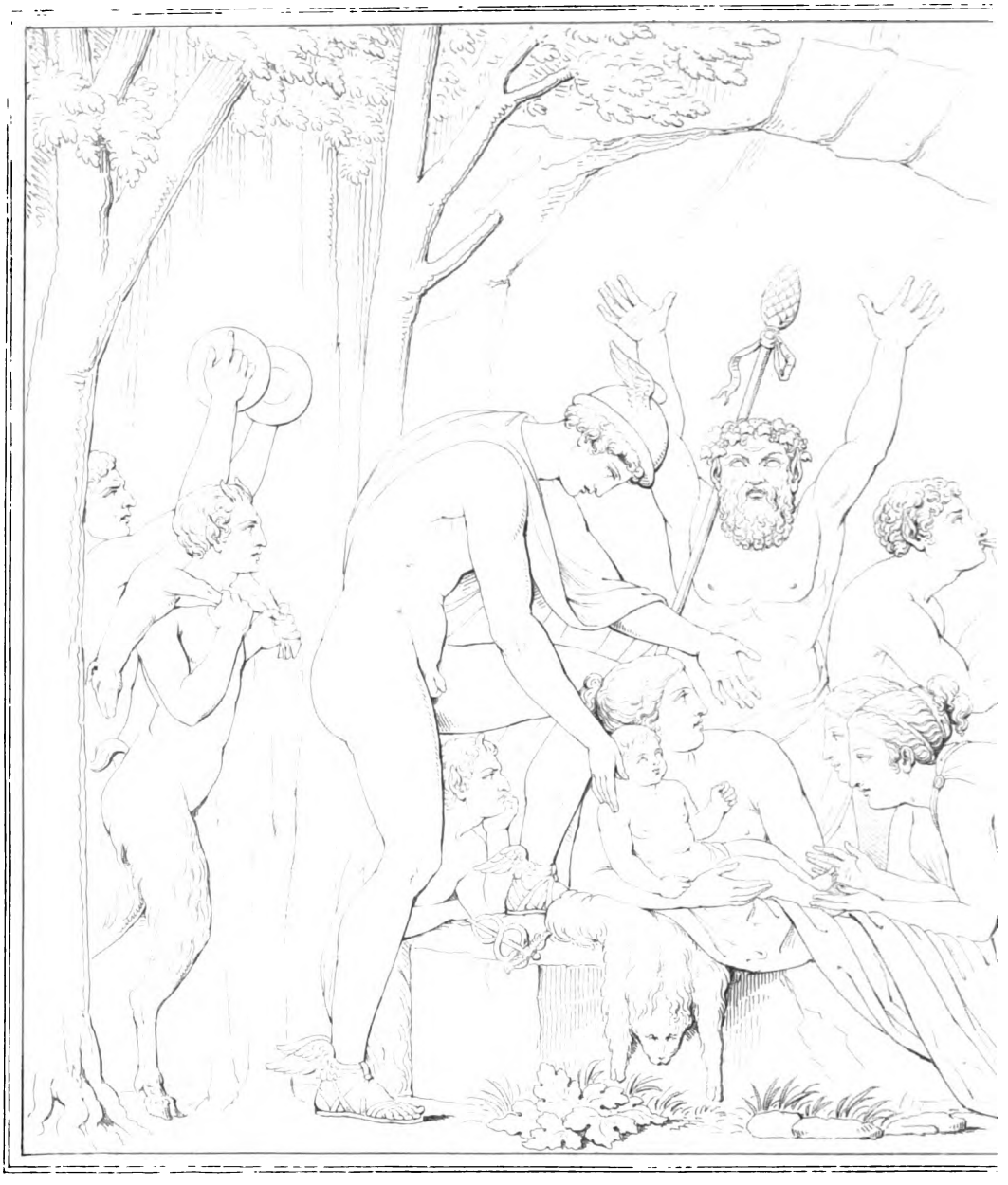
THE imagination of Canova seems to be inexhaustible in its power of clothing celestial beings in human shapes, and as the attitudes of the dance, are, more than any other, fitted to display the charms and graces of person, and to awaken soft and pleasurable emotions, he has here chosen to represent Venus dancing, with two of her attendant Graces, in the presence of Mars; while the third sister touches her sprightly lyre, and seems by her attitude to feel also its enlivening spirit. Their dress, which consists of the lightest drapery, conceals only the lower part of their persons, and their elegantly knotted tresses are left to float in an abundance of wavy ringlets. Mars, seated apart, with an air of repose, and resting his feet on a footstool, is spectator of the ball; uncovered, except by the helmet on his head and the garland of flowers, his shapely limbs and muscular form are finely displayed; but here he is no longer the furious God of War, breathing fury, and scattering terror around his path, but subdued and gentle in his aspect, caressing

Digitized by Google

a Cupid, and gazing on the beautiful dancer with the complacent smile of a favored lover; one little Cupid has playfully raised his cumbrous sword to his shoulder, while two others, with lighted torches in their hands, observe the motions of the dancers and move in unison with them. So perfect are the forms of the three sisters, that, in this respect, the spectator would scarcely know how to prefer to them the Goddess of Beauty herself, and it seems that the ingenious sculptor, by giving them almost equal personal attractions, designed that her infinitely superior charms should be wholly attributed to the expression of soul and of passion which he has infused into her glance; their look expresses the unimpassioned desire alone of pleasing the goddess; she dances in the presence of a lover whose admiring eyes are fixed upon her, and with whom she exchanges the most passionate glances.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



THE INIAN

Digitized by Google

BACCHUS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE INFANT BACCHUS

CONSIGNED BY MERCURY TO THE NYMPHS OF NYSA.

(BASSO RELIEVO; A MODEL.)

WHAT joyous movement and exultation in this scene! hardly can we refrain from joining the nymphs and sylvan deities in the exclamations with which they hail the birth of Bacchus, the offspring of Jove, and the delight of mortals.

The chief group is placed before the mouth of the cave, which is overhung with branches of trees and surrounded by the most smiling scenery; Mercury has just consigned the infant deity to the care of Leucothoe, the chief nymph, who holds him tenderly in her arms, and rests him lightly upon a block of stone upon which is spread a tiger's skin; pleased with her new office, she turns with a look of complacency towards three nymphs who are kneeling before the young deity with an expression of fondness and adoration; and already his joyous features and florid

Digitized by Google

limbs reveal his divine origin, and befit the infancy of that jocund divinity whose office was to preside over gladness and festivity, and to dispel the mists of gloom and sadness which are so apt to gather round the path of life. Mercury, still bending over him, seems to resign his charge with anxiety and to enjoin the nymphs to take the most tender care of so important a trust. The messenger of Jove is described with his usual attributes; a short mantle hangs over his shoulders, without concealing his strong and agile limbs, and seems by its disorder to shew the haste and rapidity which he is called on to employ when executing the will of Jove.

A bearded Silenus, crowned with ivy, raises his arms with vehement cries of exultation, while his thyrsus falls abandoned on his shoulder. Close beside him a faun plays joyously on his double pipe, two others hasten to the spot, one of them carrying a kid on his shoulders, the other leaping and striking together his cymbals. On the other side two nymphs, conducted by a young satyr, approach with the lightness of a zephyr to the spot where the naked infant lies; one of them has on her head a basket of freshly gathered grapes, to which she raises her right hand, while the left rests on the shoulder of her companion. The latter, preceding her by a step, places her finger on her lips with a graceful expression of youthful

Digitized by Google

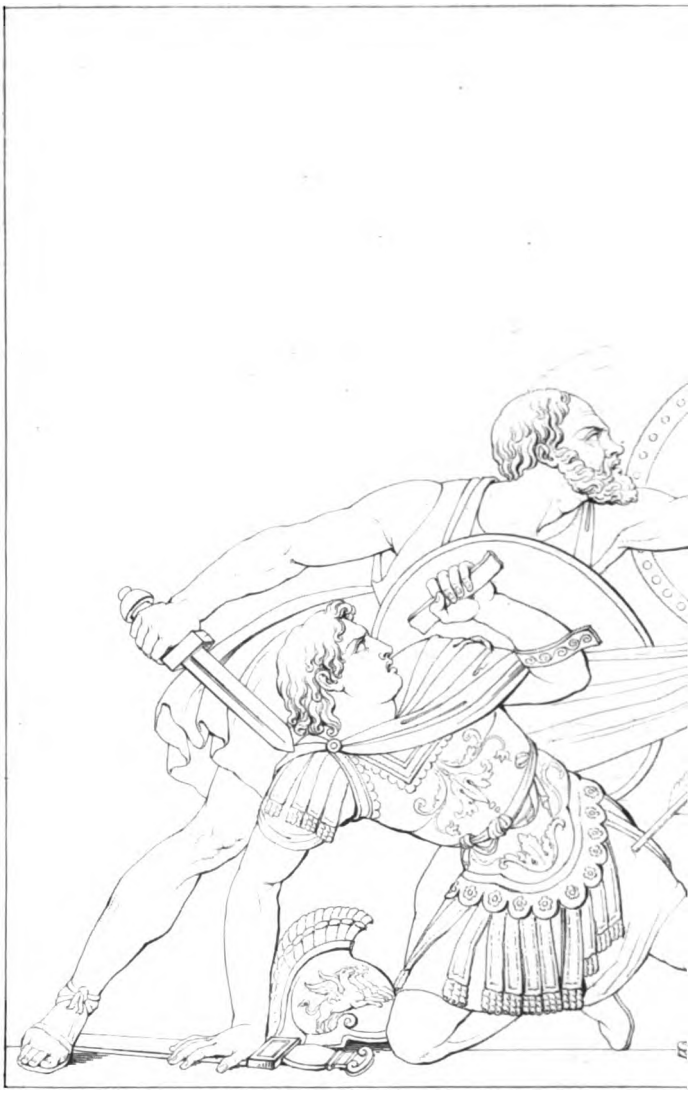
interest and the silent enjoyment of a pleasing and unexpected sight.

But it is impossible to mention all the beauties with which Canova's classical mind has enriched this animated composition.

Digitized by Google

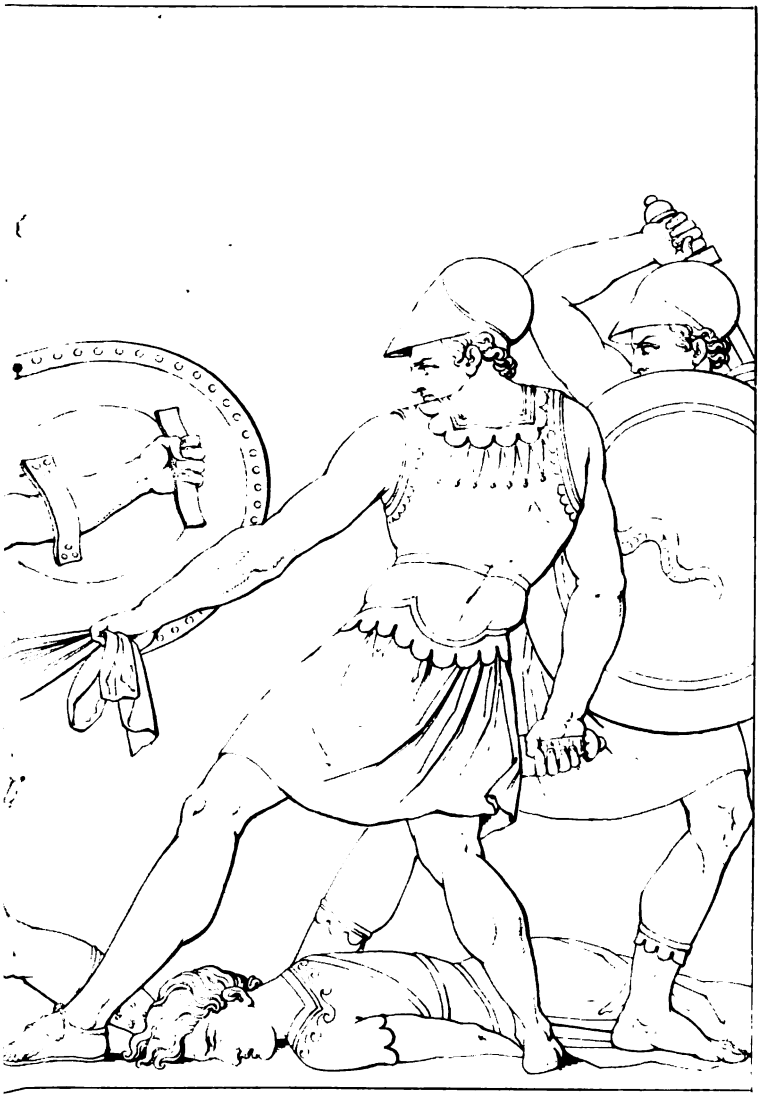
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



SOCRATES RES

Digitized by Google



TING ALCIBIADES.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

SOCRATES

SAVING THE LIFE OF ALCIBIADES.

(BASSO RELIEVO; A MODEL.)

The character of Socrates, that great and amiable philosopher, who maintained in all the extremities of life the same calm and collected mind, and who, although the most enlightened of men, declined the appellation of Wise, has strongly excited the imagination of Canova, who has represented, in basso relievo, some of the most interesting events of his life. In the present composition he is seen in the act of saving the life of his disciple Alcibiades, that celebrated Athenian, who was, at the same time, the admiration and the scandal of Greece. Fighting at the battle of Potidea, Alcibiades is struck down by the enemy; the loss of his helmet and his scattered locks denote the violence of the blow; he still, however, retains his buckler; but wounded by an arrow, which is fixed in his thigh, and unable to recover his footing, he has no means of escaping from a soldier, who, having seized with his

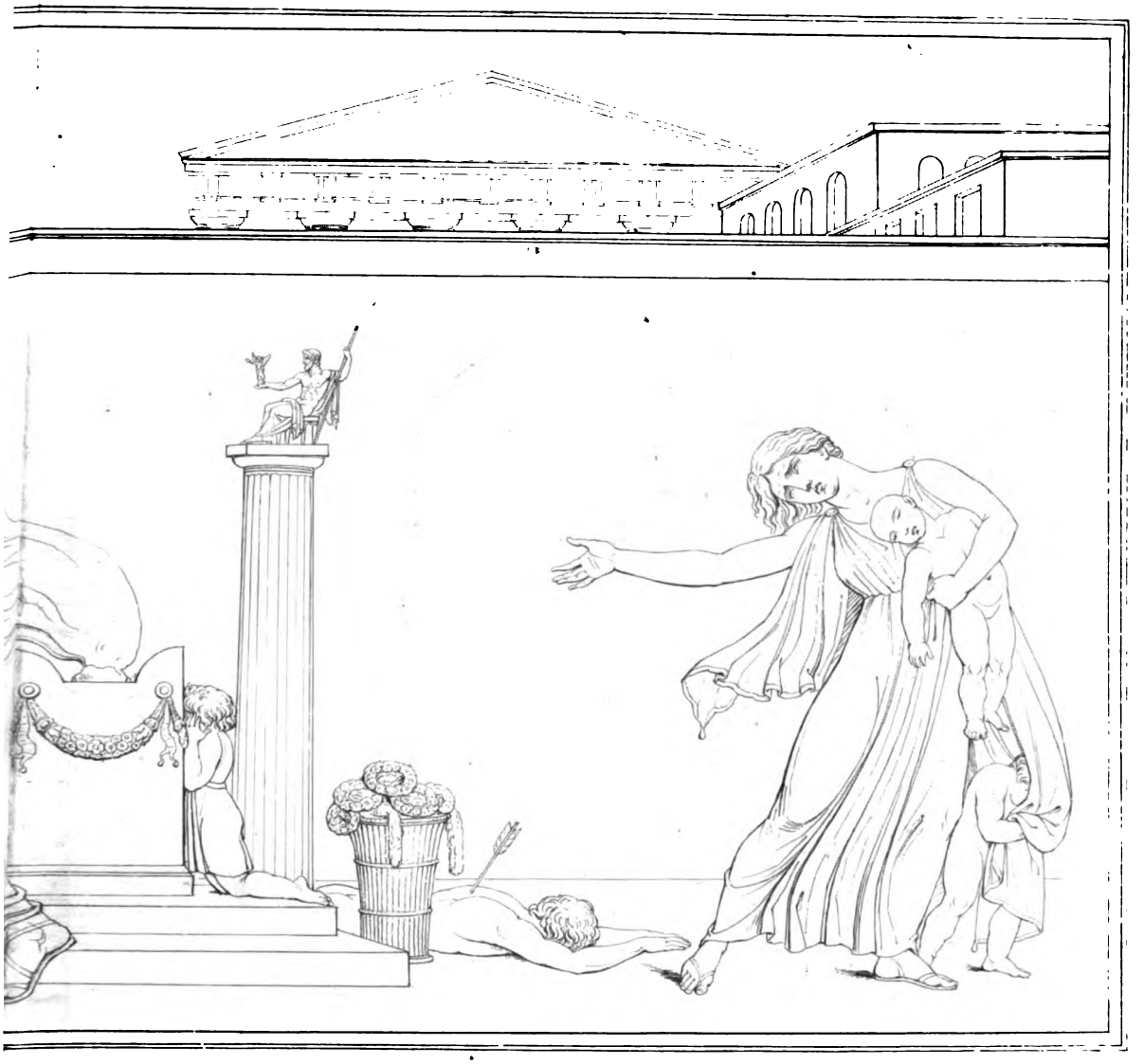
Digitized by Google

left hand the end of his mantle, is about to bury his weapon in his body. Alcibiades, whose courage is unsubdued even in this perilous moment, regards his foe with an expression of defiance, rather than of supplication, and his impassioned features forcibly express the fury and disdain with which he is animated. Socrates flies to his aid with all the devotedness of friendship, and covering him with his buckler, wards off the blows that are aimed at him, while, with the other hand, he meditates a blow against one of the foremost of the enemy. Surrounded by danger, we think the fate of these illustrious men inevitable, and memory relieves us from this apprehension only to remind us of their more lamentable destinies—Socrates dying in prison by drinking poison, to which he was sentenced by his countrymen, and Alcibiades slain in Phrygia by the vile hands of a slave.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

HERCULES



INFURIATE.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

HERCULES INFURIATE,

DESTROYING HIS CHILDREN WITH ARROWS.

(BASSO RELIEVO; A MODEL.)

THE son of Jupiter and Alcmena, after having triumphed over the perils to which the hatred of Juno had exposed him, returned to the bosom of his family, where he found that Lycus, a Theban exile, had forcibly taken possession of his throne, and meditated the destruction of his race. Him the hero slew; but while in the act of purifying himself from the stain of blood, by sacrificing in the temple of Jupiter, the malignant goddess still pursuing him, causes him to be seized by a sudden frenzy, during which he destroys his own offspring, believing them to belong to his enemy Euristheus. Canova has pourtrayed this tragical subject with great power and judgment: an altar smoking with the sacrifice, and a pedestal supporting the statue of Jupiter, occupy the centre of the basso relievo; already the pavement is strewed with the bodies of his children transfixed by arrows, and lying in various attitudes of death. Hercules, still pursuing the work of destruction, is in the act of directing a deadly shaft

Digitized by Google

against one of his infant children whom its unhappy mother has caught up in her arms, and tries to shield with her own body; extending at the same time her hand and arm towards her infuriate husband, with a look of the deepest distraction and most moving supplication; she seems to exclaim—"Have pity on thine offspring, thy wife, on thyself!"—but in vain;—his insensibility to this appeal, even more than the slaughter which surrounds him, proves the dreadful delusion under which he labours. One child has taken shelter beside its mother, and hiding its face in her vest, seems to think itself secure from the danger which it does not see. Another hides itself behind the altar, and raises its little hands to its ears to deaden the horrid shrieks which fill the temple. A third has seized his father's knee, and, although ignorant of his fault, tries by his piteous cries to stop his fury. A young female is on her knees before him, her hands raised in vehement supplication; and the aged Amphitryon rushing forward with all the force which age has left him, and neglecting his own safety, places one hand on the breast of Hercules, and endeavours with the other to arrest the murderous shaft.

Clothed only in his lion's skin, the large and immensely powerful frame of the hero are finely displayed, and fully correspond with the fame of his matchless force; while his distorted features and

Digitized by Google

infuriated aspect shew that his mind is darkened by some dire illusion. The relentless goddess, however, unsated even by this slaughter, prepares for herself the deeper vengeance, when, with the light of returning reason, shall awaken that terrible and insupportable remorse under which the most wicked of mankind may excite the pity of men and the clemency of Heaven.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

HELEN CARRIED

Digitized by Google

Engraved by Henry Moses

OFF BY THESEUS.

Strand.

Digitized by Google

HELEN,

CARRIED OFF BY THESEUS.

(BASSO RELIEVO; A MODEL)

THIS youthful exploit of Theseus is recorded with some difference of circumstance. In the account of it, which the artist has chosen to adopt, Helen is described as having already reached the fulness of her beauty. She is represented in this basso relievo dancing with two of her companions in the Temple of Diana, and offering garlands to the goddess, as it was the custom of young females among the Greeks, who were so passionately fond of the dance, that it entered into all their ceremonies, even into those of a religious character.

The walls of the temple are ornamented with stags' heads, torches, and crescents, attributes of the goddess; over the door in a small compartment we see a bow, a quiver, and two stars, in allusion to Castor and Pollux, the brothers of Helen: and perhaps the ingenious artist designed, by these, to glance at the fierce struggle, in which they afterwards engaged, for the recovery of their sister. At the left extremity of the basso relievo, a Doric column raised on several steps serves as a base to a terminal image of the

Digitized by Google

goddess; her breast is guarded by the Ægis; in either hand she holds a sceptre, resting on the ground; on her head is the corn measure, the symbol of abundance, and two stags, animals sacred to the goddess, rest beside her. In the charming group which is dancing before the altar, we easily distinguish, in the middle figure, the daughter of Tyndarus, the most beautiful of the Grecian fair: both her arms are raised, and in either hand she holds the end of a garland of flowers, the other ends of which are held by her companions, who joining their hands behind her back, give a graceful finish to the group: their light dress indicates, by its buoyant and playful folds, the sprightliness of their motions; in this manner, animated by the sacred dance, they approach to the altar: Helen, regarding one of her companions with an expression full of love and sweetness, while the other, who is nearer to the altar, gazes on the image of the goddess, before whom she is about to place her offering. Near to them a young female kneels on the pavement, beside a basket filled with garlands, with which she offers to supply the dancers: her animated and innocent expression of countenance, shews how entirely she enters into the spirit of the sacred dance, and of the offering.

At the extreme left, Theseus and his friend Pirithous are seen entering the door of the temple;

Digitized by Google

their attitudes are full of life and expression. Theseus is more advanced than his friend, and seems to wait a favourable moment for effecting his purpose; behind him Pirithous points with animation to the daughter of Leda, but is restrained by the hero, who, already expert in such exploits, seems by his motions to enjoin caution and silence. Theseus has disencumbered himself of his helmet and javelin, the latter being in the hand of his companion. Their dress consists of a short tunic, over which is worn a light mantle, fastened before by a clasp; and in the countenances of these heroes, we find all the regular beauty and the expression peculiar to their nation. Beauty in the heroic ages was the frequent cause of such acts of violence, of discord, and of sanguinary wars, unlike its ennobling influence in the refined and empassioned verses of a Petrarch, whose pure and respectful admiration constitutes its best and most perfect homage.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

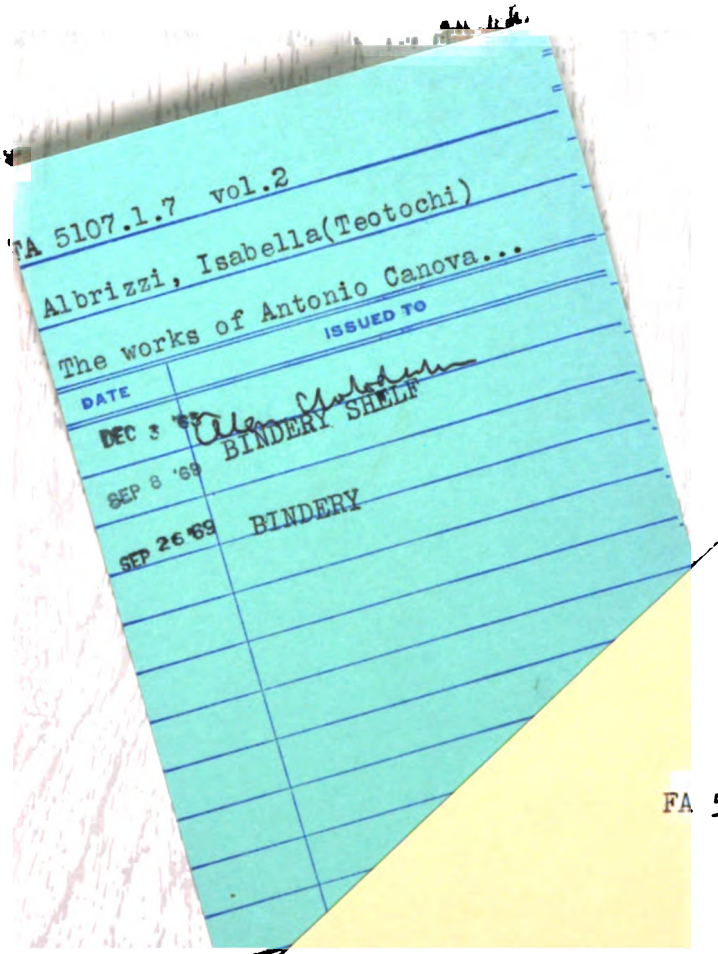
This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

Digitized by Google

FA5107.1.7
The works of Antonio Canova,
Fine Arts Library
3 2044 033 808



FA 5107...7(2

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google